

A COMPANION TO
THE QUEENSHIP
OF ISABEL
LA CATÓLICA



Edited by

HILAIRE KALLENDOFF

A Companion to the Queenship of Isabel *la Católica*

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*For my mother, a devout Catholic who instilled her faith in me,
and in whose gracious home I put the finishing touches on this project.
You are every inch a queen*



Contents

	Acknowledgements	IX
	List of Figures	x
	Notes on Contributors	XIII
1	Introduction: Inventing Isabel <i>Hilaire Kallendorf</i>	1
2	Isabel, Her Chroniclers, and the Inquisition: Self-Fashioning and Historical Memory <i>David A. Boruchoff</i>	34
3	The Learning of Ladies at the Isabelline Court <i>Elizabeth Teresa Howe</i>	72
4	Isabel I of Castile and Saintly Propaganda: Interpreting the St Anne Retable in the <i>Capilla del Condestable</i> <i>Cristina Guardiola-Griffiths</i>	91
5	Art Patronized and Collected by Queen Isabel <i>Jessica Weiss</i>	113
6	Ludic Dimensions of Courtly Love at the Court of Isabel <i>la Católica</i> <i>Roger Boase</i>	158
7	Isabel of Castile and the Opening of the Atlantic <i>William D. Phillips, Jr.</i>	196
8	Hostile Histories: Isabel and Fernando in Jewish and Muslim Narratives <i>Michelle M. Hamilton</i>	213
9	Windows into Souls: Isabel, Religion, and the Spanish Inquisition <i>John Edwards</i>	232
10	Isabel's Years of Sorrow: Consoling the Catholic Queen <i>Núria Silleras-Fernández</i>	254

- 11 Staging the Queen: Lope de Vega Reads Isabel *la Católica* 279
Edward H. Friedman
- 12 The Legend of Isabel *la Católica*, Founder of Spain 299
Caroline Travalia
- 13 Isabel *la Católica* for the 21st Century: Popular and Political
Recreations 339
Emily C. Francomano
- Bibliography 367
- Index 413

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Figures

- 4.1 Saint Anne Retable, Burgos Cathedral, photo courtesy of Rafa Sáiz 92
- 4.2 Saint Anne Retable, detail of Saint Anne Triple, Burgos Cathedral, photo courtesy of Rafa Sáiz 102
- 5.1 Juan Guas, *San Juan de los Reyes* (exterior). 1477–1504. Toledo, Spain. Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons, Querubin Saldaña Sánchez / CC BY-SA (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0>) 115
- 5.2 Juan Guas, *San Juan de los Reyes* (interior). 1477–1504. Toledo, Spain. Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons, Bernard Gagnon / CC BY-SA (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0>) 116
- 5.3 Juan Guas, *San Juan de los Reyes* (interior, nave). 1477–1504. Toledo, Spain. Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons, Selbymay / CC BY-SA 3.0 ES (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/es/deed.en>) 117
- 5.4 Juan Guas, *Interior of San Juan de los Reyes*. 1485–1490. Pen on parchment, 194 × 96 cm. Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid. Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons, faithful reproduction of a two-dimensional, public domain work of art. 118
- 5.5 Juan Guas, *San Juan de los Reyes* (exterior). 1477–1504. Toledo, Spain. Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons, PMRMaeyaert / CC BY-SA (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0>) 119
- 5.6 Juan de Colonia and Simón de Colonia, *Cartuja de Miraflores* (exterior). 1454–1488. Miraflores. Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons, Ecelan 08:48, 1 December 2007 (UTC) / CC BY-SA (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>) 120
- 5.7 Juan de Colonia and Simón de Colonia, *Cartuja de Miraflores* (exterior, portal). 1454–1488. Miraflores. Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons, José Luis Filpo Cabana / CC BY-SA (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0>) 121
- 5.8 Juan de Colonia and Simón de Colonia, *Cartuja de Miraflores* (interior, chapel). 1454–1488. Miraflores. Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons, Turol Jones, un artista de cojones from Villanueva del Cascajal, República Independiente de Mi Casa / CC BY (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0>) 122
- 5.9 Juan de Colonia and Simón de Colonia, *Cartuja de Miraflores* (interior, choir). 1454–1488. Miraflores. Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons, Jose Luis Filpo Cabana / CC BY (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0>) 123
- 5.10 Gil de Siloé, *Tomb of Juan II and Isabel of Portugal* (viewed from above). 1489–1493. Alabaster. *Cartuja de Miraflores*, Miraflores. Figure courtesy of Alamy. 125

- 5.11 Gil de Siloé, *Tomb of Juan II and Isabel of Portugal* (viewed from side). 1489–1493. Alabaster. *Cartuja de Miraflores*, Miraflores. Figure courtesy of Alamy. 126
- 5.12 Gil de Siloé, *Tomb of the Infante Alonso*. 1489–1493. Alabaster. *Cartuja de Miraflores*, Miraflores. Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons, Ecelan / CC BY-SA (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0>) 127
- 5.13 Gil de Siloé (sculpture) and Diego de la Cruz (polychromy), *Retablo Mayor*. 1469–1499. Polychromed wood. *Cartuja de Miraflores*, Miraflores. Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons, Rowanwindwhistler / CC BY-SA (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0>) 128
- 5.14 Photomontage reconstruction of Juan de Flandes, *Altarpiece of John the Baptist*. ca. 1500. Oil on panel. Panels in the Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland; National Museum of Serbia, Belgrade; Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, Geneva; Museum Mayer van der Bergh, Antwerp; and the Abelló Collection, Madrid. 129
- 5.15 Juan de Flandes, *The Birth and Naming of John the Baptist*. ca. 1500. Oil on panel, 88.4 × 49.9 cm. The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland. John L. Severance Fund. 130
- 5.16 Pedro Berruguete, *Annunciation*. ca. 1500. Oil on panel, 108 × 145 cm. Carthusian Chapterhouse, Miraflores. Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons, faithful reproduction of a two-dimensional, public domain work of art. 131
- 5.17 Rogier van der Weyden, *Miraflores Altarpiece*. Before 1445. Oil on panel, 74 × 44.5 cm. Gemäldegalerie, Berlin. Figure courtesy of Alamy. 133
- 5.18 Photomontage reconstruction of Juan de Flandes, *Miraflores Altarpiece Copy*. ca. 1496. Oil on panel. Panels in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and the Capilla Real, Granada. 133
- 5.19 Juan de Flandes, *Christ Appearing to his Mother*, ca. 1496. Oil on panel, 63.5 × 38.1 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. The Bequest of Michael Dreicer, 1921. 134
- 5.20 Francisco Chacón, *The Fifth Sorrow*. ca. 1492. Oil on panel, 197 × 160.5 cm. Museo de Bellas Artes de Granada, Granada. Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons, faithful reproduction of a two-dimensional, public domain work of art. 136
- 5.21 Juan de Flandes, *The Marriage Feast at Cana* from the *Retablo de Isabel*. ca. 1500–1504. Oil on panel, 21 × 15.9 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. The Jack and Belle Linsky Collection, 1982. 139
- 5.22 Juan de Flandes, *The Temptation of Christ* from the *Retablo de Isabel*. ca. 1500–1504. Oil on panel, 21 × 15.5 cm. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Alisa Mellon Bruce Fund 1967.7.1 140

- 5.23 *Triumph of Fame*. ca. 1502–1504. Wool and silk. 359 × 335 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Purchase, The Annenberg Foundation Gift, 1998. 144
- 5.24 Colyn de Coter (design), Pieter van Aelst or workshop (weaver), *Mass of St. Gregory*. ca. 1502–1504. Wool, silk, and silver-and gilt-metal wrapped thread. 342 × 407 cm. Patrimonio Nacional, Palacio Real de Madrid, Madrid. Image courtesy of M.C. Esteban/Iberfoto/Mary Evans. 147
- 12.1 1938 *Peseta* banknote 305
- 12.2 1938 *Peseta* banknote (reverse side) 305
- 12.3 *Carta de Privilegio de los Reyes Católicos al Colegio de Santa Cruz de Valladolid* 310
- 12.4 *Carta de Privilegio de los Reyes Católicos al Colegio de Santa Cruz de Valladolid* (detail) 311
- 13.1 Desirée Cordero, Miss Universe contestant from Spain, in the National Costume Competition segment of the pageant held on 21 January 2015 in Miami, dressed as Queen Isabel I (photo courtesy of Gary Rothstein) 340
- 13.2 Detail of Penélope Cruz playing the role of Macarena Granada in Fernando Trueba's film *The Queen of Spain* (2016) showing a triptych of divas: Macarena-Isabel, the Hollywood queen; a traditional portrait of Isabel, the saintly queen; and Doña Matilde, the Francoist official biographer in the film. 359

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Introduction: Inventing Isabel

Hilaire Kallendorf

1 Unknowable Virtue

The “authentic” virtue of one who is reputed a hero is simply unknowable ...

WILLIAM CHILDERS¹

“Where did you learn to apply lipstick like that?” my mother gasped in startled tones. The hair had risen visibly on the back of her neck. She grabbed the lipstick tube out of my hand to examine it more closely, her uneasiness spreading to me. “That’s the same way my mother used to do it!” We stared at each other wordlessly, both wide-eyed, amazed. We both knew I could not possibly have learned that particular way of applying lipstick from my grandmother, who had died the year before I was born.

I have always been fascinated by that grandmother, whom I never knew. Of all her children and grandchildren, I resemble her most closely. I am told I move the way she did. Through the years, relatives have identified innumerable other uncanny affinities. When I finally had a house of my own, I proudly placed her framed wedding portrait in the hallway. In that picture she looked beautiful, but also very sad.

It was not until years later that my son told me that the antique sepia photograph of a sad woman in a white dress gave him nightmares. It was not until years later still that my mother revealed the secret behind that wistfully beautiful face: my grandmother was already pregnant with my mother when she married, an unpardonable sin for a Catholic school girl taught to revere the Virgin Mary. She was not happy about getting married because she was held to be in disgrace.

For the record, I took down the portrait immediately when I heard it had caused my son distress. Actually, I had taken it down already, to be replaced

1 William Childers, “Baroque Quixote: New World Writing and the Collapse of the Heroic Ideal,” in *Baroque New Worlds: Representation, Transculturation, Counterconquest*, ed. Lois Parkinson Zamora and Monika Kaup (Durham and London: 2010), 415–49, at p. 423. In his essay Childers traces this paradigm shift from Cervantes to Gracián.

with more recent generations, and it was only then that my son told me he had always hated the fact that he could see it through his bedroom door. I wished he had told me earlier. The portrait was replaced at the point where my second son was young enough not to receive a similar scar from the likeness of his ancestor.

I tell this anecdote because in several ways it reminds me of the situation in which Hispanics today find themselves vis-à-vis Queen Isabel I. She is that haunting likeness staring out at us from the sepia-tinted photograph, whose habits and mannerisms have been passed down to us, for better and for worse. We wrestle with her legacy in the same way as this little iconoclastic drama played out in my family. Was she responsible for her great-grandchildren's frightening dreams? Wasn't it rather the horror films my son had imprudently watched? Is it time to take the portrait down from its honored place on the wall? Is it time to throw the ancient photograph out altogether? Doesn't this amount to the proverbial equivalent of throwing the baby out with the bath water? What is the most responsible approach to managing historical memory?

This volume seeks to provide a few tentative answers to these questions, but inevitably it will raise more queries than it will offer answers. We are only just now beginning to understand the nightmares Spain's phantasmagoric grandmother (perhaps unwittingly) caused.

• • •

In the introduction to *Isabel Rules: Constructing Queenship, Wielding Power*, Barbara Weissberger makes this dramatic pronouncement: "Despite counter-narratives and contestation, the quasi-hagiographic image of the Catholic Monarch forged by official chroniclers in the late 15th and early 16th centuries turned Isabel into 'a cornerstone of the Spanish national imaginary' that persists to this day."² This is most certainly true, but Isabel's influence extends further than Spain. A statue of Isabel (rather than statues of both Catholic Monarchs) greets visitors to the Organization of American States in Washington, D.C. with the inscription "Isabel I the Catholic / Queen of Castile / of Aragon / of the islands / of dry land / of the ocean sea."³ A similar statue

2 Barbara Weissberger, *Isabel Rules: Constructing Queenship, Wielding Power* (Minneapolis: 2004), xvii.

3 "Ysabel I la Católica / Reina de Castilla / de Aragón / de las islas / y tierra firme / del mar océano" (quoted in Caroline Travalia's essay "The Legend of Isabel *la Católica*, Founder of Spain," 299-338 in the present volume, at p. 300 note 3).

used to stand in front of the capitol building of the state of California, before – in the latest round of politically correct statue-bashing – the state announced that in deference to indigenous peoples, it would be removed.⁴

Never has it seemed more urgent to study Isabel's legacy, for never has that legacy been so contested. Historiographical writing about Isabel seems inextricably bound up with competing discourses of virtue and vice. In my monograph *Ambiguous Antidotes: Virtue as Vaccine for Vice in Early Modern Spain*, I explored the ambiguity of virtue as a cultural category and traced how our understanding of it evolves over time. In the Spanish Renaissance, the predominant philosophical models for virtue were pagan ones derived from Plato, Aristotle, and Horace, whose classical ideals coexisted uncomfortably (even for humanists) with Christian faith. A key foundation for understanding notions of virtue during this period is the *aurea mediocritas*, or Golden Mean:

According to this doctrine [...] Virtue exists as a midpoint between opposing Vices on a continuum or spectrum which is by definition a *pharmakon*, since it encompasses both poison and cure. For example, the quality of being courageous (Fortitude) falls somewhere between “rash” (an excess of courage) and “timid” (not courageous enough, which would be a defect). This scheme is surprising because it defies the dualism normally typical of Aristotle and the Scholastics. At least through postmodern lenses, one might even be tempted to see in this search for a “third term” or *aporia* a primitive form of proto-deconstruction.⁵

In the first part of this introduction, I would like to apply a similar framework to Isabel's life and divergent representations of her queenship through the centuries. In doing so, I ask: what were her perceived virtues? Her perceived vices? Have those changed over time?

As I am not an Isabel specialist myself, I have been guided in this endeavor by the brilliant scholars who graciously accepted my invitation to contribute essays and whose work is collected here. This approach is empirical: which virtues of Isabel do these scholars and their sources tend to emphasize? Which

4 The California statue of Isabel was slated for removal along with a statue of Christopher Columbus, another “cursed” figure in Spain's history. Carolina Álvarez Albalá and Loreto Sánchez Seoane, “Los personajes malditos de la historia de España,” *El Independiente*, 28 June 2020, <https://www.elindependiente.com/tendencias/cultura/2020/06/28/los-personajes-malditos-de-la-historia-de-espana/>.

5 Hilaire Kallendorf, *Ambiguous Antidotes: Virtue as Vaccine for Vice in Early Modern Spain* (Toronto: 2017), 29.

of her vices do they critique? It may turn out that in this analysis, some of her 'vices' prove to be excesses of some of her 'virtues.'

...

To many non-scholarly Spaniards, particularly of an older generation, Isabel remains what Emily Francomano calls "the saintly ideogram of cultural memory."⁶ Her virtues were enumerated in chronicles of her era such as the *Continuación de la Crónica de Pulgar*.⁷ As Pope Sixtus IV wrote to Queen Isabel during her lifetime: "Your sincerity, piety and reverence for God are known to us."⁸ In his essay for this volume, David Boruchoff makes reference to "[t]he conceits that Isabel used to project piety, zeal, humility, obedience and devotion – in brief, her Christian virtue."⁹

This constellation of qualities may best be considered under the heading of faith or piety, which in the case of Isabel seems to have been utterly genuine:

As a devout Catholic, Isabella became a member of the "third order," as the groups of secular women pledged either temporarily or permanently to religious life, were called. During her visits to the convents, Isabella appeared in modest clothes, accompanied by only a few attendants, a rosary, a book of hours, her spindles and needles. Daily Isabella prayed with the nuns, ate at their tables, sewed, spun, and talked with them about the true spirit of Christianity and the value of religious commitment.¹⁰

But her religious devotion was not limited to this periodic, selective imitation of monastic life: "historical records as they have come down to us [...] describe Isabel dedicating several hours each day to religious devotion."¹¹ She also used devotional objects such as paintings, sculptures, tapestries, portable altars, crucifixes, and rosaries in the daily practice of Catholic ritual. We know this from evidence obtained through inventories of her possessions as well as records of sales and purchases of these objects, for example in the auction held after

6 Emily Francomano, "Isabel la Católica for the 21st Century: Popular and Political Recreations," 339-66 of the present volume, at p. 360.

7 Cited in Vicente Rodríguez Valencia, *Isabel la Católica en la Opinión de Españoles y Extranjeros: Siglos xv al xx* (Valladolid: 1970), vol. 1, 92-93.

8 See the chapter by David Boruchoff, "Isabel, Her Chroniclers, and the Inquisition: Self-Fashioning and Historical Memory," in the present volume, 34-71.

9 Boruchoff, "Isabel, Her Chroniclers, and the Inquisition," 60.

10 Nancy Rubin Stuart, *Isabella of Castile: The First Renaissance Queen* (New York: 1991), 338.

11 Francomano, "Isabel la Católica for the 21st Century," 345.

her death. Jessica Weiss also confirms this with regard to religious paintings in her possession: “the documents indicate the scale, scope, and general trends of Isabel’s painting collection. The vast majority were devotional in nature.”¹²

Isabel’s piety fostered such a reverence for her reputation that she has periodically been proposed (and rejected) as a candidate for possible sainthood. David Boruchoff alludes to

testimonies to Isabel’s Christian virtue compiled by Vicente Rodríguez Valencia, canon-librarian of Valladolid’s cathedral chapter and postulator for Isabel’s cause. This supporting evidence was intended for the *Congregatio pro causis sanctorum* (Congregation for the causes of saints) and would finally comprise some 27 volumes. Rodríguez Valencia’s presentation of Sixtus IV’s brief of 25 February 1483 [...] cites the Pope’s praise for Isabel’s love of faith and orthodoxy, piety, religious sentiment, constancy, holy purpose, and royal virtues.¹³

Emily Francomano clarifies these abortive attempts at canonization:

The initial causes for canonization included Isabel’s personal piety and her evangelization of Spain and the Americas. Although – as Rodríguez Valencia’s anthology of Isabel’s “fama de santidad” would seem to attest – her saintliness was evident from her youth, the campaign to canonize Isabel as a saint began in earnest in 1958, when the Archbishop of Valladolid, García Goldáraz (1893–1973), approved an ecclesiastical investigation into the causes for beatification.¹⁴

The timing of her canonization campaign was not accidental, occurring right in the middle of Franco’s dictatorship. Francomano sums up the case for Isabel’s canonization as an official saint of the Catholic Church: “For some, Isabel is a saint to be revered for her steadfast faith and the spread of Christianity in the Americas, wrongly impugned by the Black Legend and the chauvinism of anti-Catholic historians.”¹⁵ In this view, which is confirmed by Barbara Weissberger, Isabel “remains the self-contained, modest, pious, and resolute young woman idealized over the last five hundred years.”¹⁶ In her essay for this

12 Jessica Weiss, “Art Patronized and Collected by Queen Isabel,” 113–57 of the present volume, at 141.

13 Boruchoff, “Isabel, Her Chroniclers, and the Inquisition,” 65.

14 Francomano, “Isabel *la Católica* for the 21st Century,” 361.

15 Francomano, “Isabel *la Católica* for the 21st Century,” 341.

16 Barbara F. Weissberger, “Isabel on TV: Politics Past and Present,” *Early Modern Women: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 8 (2013): 349–59, at 351–52.

volume, Francomano concludes that “the campaign for canonization seeks to turn Isabel into a global Catholic icon.”¹⁷

A specific feature of Isabel's piety was her notorious chastity, which (we should hasten to clarify) refers not to any sort of nun-like celibacy,¹⁸ but instead to sexual fidelity within marriage. Historian Henry Kamen asserts that “Isabel was devout, rigid, and chaste.”¹⁹ Caroline Travalia references the *Crónica de los Reyes Católicos* by Alonso de Santa Cruz, which offers a list of Isabel's qualities as a ruler: chastity, honesty, saintliness, and fairness.²⁰ Peter Martyr of Anghiera wrote a letter after Isabel's death in which he declared: “Not only was she during her life a model of chastity among all married women, but she could with right and reason call herself Chastity personified.”²¹ This makes Isabel sound rather like an allegorical figure in a morality play. Roger Boase provides an instructive point of reference by comparing Queen Isabel I of Spain to her near historical counterpart, Queen Elizabeth I of England: “Like Elizabeth I of England a century later, she knew that it served her political purposes to model her conduct on that of the stereotypical chaste and courtly lady.”²² Spanish novelist Carmen Martín Gaité focused on this quality of Isabel's as it was trumpeted by the Falange in her reflections on growing up during Franco's dictatorship, most notably in *El cuarto de atrás*.²³

In a similar vein, praise of Isabel often centered around her alleged humility and asceticism, or abstemiousness. In the words of Jessica Weiss,

17 Francomano, “Isabel la Católica for the 21st Century,” 365.

18 Elizabeth Leffeldt notes that Isabel and her government did, however, take advantage of opportunities to craft policies for nuns as a way of shaping her own chaste image: “In a series of dispatches detailing the means by which ecclesiastical visitors were supposed to ensure the observance of enclosure, the monarchs and their reformers continued to articulate their ideology of female purity and chastity [...]. Talavera's theology of enclosure [...] was a culturally resonant and potent marriage of images of sexual and ethnic purity. Isabel's support of such models emphasizes the centrality of sexual and ethnic purity to her campaign for political legitimacy.” Elizabeth Leffeldt, “Ruling Sexuality: The Political Legitimacy of Isabel of Castile,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 53.1 (2000): 31–56, 47, 49.

19 Henry Kamen, *Una Historia conflictiva: España, 1469–1714* (Madrid: 1984), 31.

20 Caroline Travalia, “The Legend of Isabel la Católica, Founder of Spain,” 311.

21 “No sólo entre las matronas fue durante su vida ejemplo de castidad, sino que con derecho y razón podía llamarse la Castidad misma” (Pedro Mártir, *Epistolario*, ed. José López de Toro [Madrid: 1953], 90–91).

22 Roger Boase, “Ludic Dimensions of Courtly Love at the Court of Isabel la Católica,” 158–95 of the present volume, at 181.

23 Carmen Martín Gaité, *El cuarto de atrás*, ed. José Teruel (Madrid: 2018).

[D]ue to the specific cultural context of Castile, it was also necessary for Isabel to balance the sumptuousness of her court with the traditional Christian values of humility and asceticism. For example, while visiting the army during the siege of Granada, Isabel felt that the *grandees* were too ostentatious in their personal effects. The silk tents trimmed in gold thread, embossed armor, and gold plate conflicted with the holy mission of the military campaign. This concern over lavishness and its equivalency with lax religiosity coincided with the framing of the economic travesties of Enrique IV's reign as resulting from the lasciviousness and extravagance of his court. Isabel then set out to rectify this moral depravity by curbing cultural excess through the decreeing of new sumptuary laws.²⁴

Elizabeth Teresa Howe suggests that instead of spending money on finery, Isabel preferred to spend it on books. Ronald Surtz confirms this: "Isabel's self-fashioning as a pious ruler and promoter of learning is directly reflected in Pietro Monti's now-lost *Opusculum de Conceptione Virginis*."²⁵

Connected to her supposed rejection of feminine adornment was Isabel's much-noted courage, or fortitude. In fact, her reputation in this area was so great that Howe refers to the "qualities of the *mujer varonil* (manly woman) later ascribed to Isabel herself."²⁶ Barbara Weissberger spins out the consequences of Queen Isabel's assumption of not only feminine, but also masculine, virtues in her assertion that "the example of Isabel's 'manliness' may even have led to the transformation of the game of chess near the end of the 15th century, wherein the queen became the dominant piece on the board."²⁷ A letter to this effect was penned by Pedro Mártir de Anglería in 1502:

This woman is stronger than a strong man, more constant than any human soul, a marvelous example of honesty and modesty, such that Nature never made a woman similar [...]. [T]hose qualities, so alien

24 Weiss, "Art Patronized and Collected by Queen Isabel," 157.

25 Ronald Surtz, "The Reciprocal Construction of Isabelline Book Patronage," in *Queen Isabel I of Castile: Power, Patronage, Persona*, ed. Barbara F. Weissberger (Rochester, NY: 2008), 55–70, at 56.

26 Elizabeth Teresa Howe, "The Learning of Ladies at the Isabelline Court," 72–90 of the present volume, at 76.

27 Barbara F. Weissberger, *Isabel Rules: Constructing Queenship, Wielding Power* (Minneapolis: 2004), 153.

to women – as if contradictory – are found in her as both innate and aggrandized.²⁸

Similarly, Roger Boase recalls that the Venetian ambassador Andrea Navagiero described how, when the queen and her retinue of ladies appeared on the battlefield near Granada, they breathed courage into every heart.²⁹ Edward Friedman describes the masculinist literary version of Isabel created by the Golden Age playwright Lope de Vega for the stage as ambitious, forthright, and intrepid, facing challenges with courage and aplomb.³⁰ Finally, Rafael García y García de Castro, Archbishop of Granada, in *Virtudes de la Reina Católica* (1961) emphasizes “her fortitude in facing a strong and able foe [presumably referring to the Muslims vanquished in the Reconquest].”³¹

Perhaps because she was considered to be in some way ‘manly,’ she also enjoyed the attribution of another virtue besides fortitude commonly associated with statesmen and other masculine heroes – namely, prudence. Mártir de Anglería again in one of his letters (this time written after her death) praised Isabel for being

[a] woman who was greater than all others, not only emulating man, but with a strength of spirit, prudence, and honesty – this last quality inexistent in women – [that] can take the measure of any one of our most illustrious and famous heroes.³²

A similar contemporaneous testimony regarding Isabel’s prudence is offered by Baldesar Castiglione, whose *Il Cortegiano* became a manual for courtly behavior for generations of Renaissance European courtiers: “there has not been in our time a more shining example on earth of true goodness, of greatness of

28 “Es esta mujer más fuerte que un varón fuerte, más constante que toda alma humana, maravilloso ejemplo de honestidad y pudor, semejante a la cual nunca la Naturaleza hizo otra mujer [...] [A]quellas cualidades ajenas a la mujer – como términos opuestos – se encuentren en ésta como nativas y amplificadas” (Pedro Mártir de Anglería, *Epistolario*, ed. José López de Toro [Madrid: 1953–57], epistle 6 [1502], 20–21).

29 Boase, “Ludic Dimensions of Courtly Love,” 182.

30 Edward Friedman, “Staging the Queen: Lope de Vega Reads Isabel *la Católica*,” 279–98 of the present volume, at 286.

31 “su diligencia en defender la fe ortodoxa, de su fortaleza en hacer cara a un enemigo hábil y fuerte” (Rafael García y García de Castro, *Virtudes de la Reina Católica* [Madrid: 1961], 271).

32 “Mujer que supera a todas las mujeres, no sólo émula del hombre, sino que en fortaleza de espíritu, en prudencia y en constancia, cualidad esta última que no acontece en mujer, puede parangonarse con cualquiera de los más ilustres y afamados héroes” (Mártir de Anglería, *Epistolario*, 1:185).

spirit, of prudence, of religion, of honesty, of courtesy, of liberality, in sum, of every virtue, than Queen Isabel.”³³

But paradoxically, given her prudence, fortitude, and resulting associations with the more ‘masculine’ virtues, Isabel was also known for her wifeliness and maternalism. In his chapter, David Boruchoff points out that

the officially authorized *Positio super vita, virtutibus et fama sanctitatis* or *Position Paper on the Life, Virtues and Reputation of Sanctity* (1990) – a compendium of the enormous archive of texts amassed by Rodríguez Valencia and his successors – also mines documents for evidence, not only of Christian virtue (piety, humility, devotion, obedience to the pope, etc.), but also of the queen’s exemplary performance of royal, spousal, and “motherly” duties.³⁴

The chronicler Alonso de Santa Cruz described her as a loyal companion to her husband.³⁵ Both Fray Luis de León and Juan Luis Vives present Isabel as a mirror in which women might observe her virtues and imitate them.³⁶ Francomano recalls the national-Catholic and Francoist image of Queen Isabel, revered for her piety, domestic virtues, and self-abnegation.³⁷ This last quality also leads to a consideration of her ‘selfless’ service. Boruchoff estimates that “Queen Isabel I crafted a *persona* – an image of piety, humility, integrity, zeal and selfless service to the faith and/or nation – by invoking time-honored conceits.”³⁸

One of these hallowed conceits tapped into Spain’s hyper-Catholic devotion to the Virgin Mary. Both during her lifetime and afterward, Isabel was compared successively to Mary herself as well as to her Son, Jesus Christ. Associations between the Queen of Heaven and Isabel appear prominently in a letter written to the Catholic Queen by a writer of Jewish extraction named Mosén Diego de Valera in 1479 after the Portuguese invaders had been driven back across the border. He wrote:

33 “nō è stato à tempi nostri, al mondo piu chiaro exempio di uera bonta, di grandezza d’animo, di prudentia, di relligione, d’honestà, di cortesia, di liberalità, in somma d’ogni uirtù, che la Regina Isabella” (Baldassare Castiglione, *Il libro del cortegiano* [Venice: 1528], fol. k4r).

34 Boruchoff, “Isabel, Her Chroniclers, and the Inquisition,” 66.

35 Alonso de Santa Cruz, *Crónica de los Reyes Católicos*, ed. Juan de Mata Carriazo (Seville: 1951), 304.

36 María del Pilar Rábade Obradó, “El arquetipo femenino en los debates intelectuales del siglo xv castellano,” *En la España Medieval* 11 (1998): 300.

37 Francomano, “Isabel la Católica for the 21st Century,” 339.

38 Boruchoff, “Isabel, Her Chroniclers, and the Inquisition,” 69.

It can truly be said that just as our Lord wanted our glorious Lady to be born so that from her could issue the universal Redeemer of the human race, so did he determine that you, My Lady, should be born so as to reform and restore these kingdoms and rescue them from the tyrannical government under which they have long remained [...].³⁹

Guardiola-Griffiths analyzes this passage thus: "The analogy presented in Valera's letter to Isabel I subtly emphasizes the power held by the queen, which highlights her redemptive qualities. Isabel has come to redeem her people like Mary, who was born to fulfill a divine prophecy of Christian redemption."⁴⁰

This same analogy could be found not only in private letters, but also in published works from this period, such as the afore-mentioned *Opusculum de Conceptione Virginis* by Pietro Monti. This work was a treatise, now lost, on the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. Ronald Surtz surmises regarding the contents of this treatise (published in Milan in 1492) that it was

at once a public expression of her [i.e. Isabel's] Marian devotion, an intervention in religious politics through which she chose sides with respect to a controversial theological issue, and an image-building act that reinforced the association between the redemptive roles of the Queen of Castile and the Queen of Heaven.⁴¹

In the category of poetry and/or musical composition, Antón de Montoro's "Canción [...] en loor de la Reyna doña Ysabel de Castilla" likewise traces Isabel's and the Virgin's shared holy qualities:

High sovereign queen, if you had been born before the daughter of Saint Anne, the Son of God would have been made flesh from you. Since what is beautiful, saintly, wise is proven through experience, You owe what that one, the perfect Virgin, with exception to divinity, owes. And, since

39 "Bien se puede con verdad desir, que asy commo nuestro Señor quiso en este mundo nasciese la gloriosa Señora nuestra, porque della procediese el vniuersal Redentor del linaje humano, asy determinó, vos, Señora, nasciédeses para reformar é restaurar estos reynos é sacarlos de la tyránica gouernacion en que tan luenga mente han estado" (Diego de Valera, *Epístolas de Mosen Diego de Valera enbiadas en diversos tiempos é á diversas personas* [Madrid: 1878], 46; English translation in Barbara Weissberger, *Isabel Rules* [Minneapolis: 1993], 56–57).

40 Cristina Guardiola-Griffiths, "Isabel I of Castile and Sainly Propaganda: Interpreting the St. Anne Retable in the *Capilla del Condestable*," 91–112 of the present volume, at 103.

41 Surtz, "The Reciprocal Construction," 56–57.

our glory and life are won through you, if Saint Anne had not given birth until you had been born, from you the Son of God would have been made flesh.⁴²

Peter Martyr of Anghiera chimes in to make this connection explicit in a letter written after the queen's death:

After the Immaculate Virgin Mother of God – for whose cause this prediction appears to be spoken – this prophecy could be applied to her: God performed a miracle upon the land and a woman surrounded man.⁴³

According to Roger Boase, in a text bearing the title “De otras reynas diferente,” Pedro de Cartagena likewise describes Isabel as a woman without defect, the first on earth and the second in heaven (after the Virgin Mary, of course).⁴⁴ In accordance with this line of reasoning, quite recently the Spanish commission on Isabel's canonization asked whether Isabel was “the greatest woman in History since the Mother of God.”⁴⁵

But apparently it was not enough to liken Isabel to Christ's Mother; some even dared to compare her messianic role to that of Christ Himself. As Roger Boase explains, “Queen Isabel had been brought up to believe that, in restoring law and order, suppressing heresy, and conquering Granada, she was fulfilling a divine mission.”⁴⁶ In her book *Legitimizing the Queen: Propaganda and Ideology in the Reign of Isabel I of Castile*, Cristina Guardiola-Griffiths points out that in “the many works written for her and dedicated to her [...] Isabel is seen [...] as a just and wise monarch, as a redeemer of her people, and as a divine sovereign.”⁴⁷ Emily Francomano warns that this rhetoric has recently

42 “Alta Reyna soberana / si fuéradas antes vos / que la hija de Sant’Ana, / de vos el Hijo de Dios / recibiera carne humana. / Que bella, santa, discreta, / por experiencia se prueve, / aquélla Virgen perfecta, / la divinidad ecepta, / esso le debéys que os debe. / Y pues que por vos se gana / la vida y gloria de nos, / si no pariera Sant’Ana / hasta ser nascida vos, / de vos el Hijo de Dios / rescibiera carne humana.” (Quoted in Gregory Kaplan, “In Search of Salvation: The Deification of Isabel *la Católica* in *Converso* Poetry,” *Hispanic Review* 66.3 [1998]: 289–308, at 299).

43 “Después de la Inmaculada Virgen Madre de Dios – por cuya causa parece pronunciado este vaticinio –, se le puede aplicar a ella aquella profecía: Dios hizo una maravilla sobre la tierra y una mujer rodeó al hombre” (Mártir, *Epistolario*, 90–91).

44 Boase, “Ludic Dimensions of Courtly Love,” 183.

45 Francomano, “Isabel *la Católica* for the 21st Century,” 363.

46 Boase, “Ludic Dimensions of Courtly Love,” 181.

47 Cristina Guardiola-Griffiths, *Legitimizing the Queen: Propaganda and Ideology in the Reign of Isabel I of Castile* (Lewisberg: 2011), 11.

been appropriated by right-wing politicians in Spain who are trying to use it to pernicious ends:

After attending “Isabel the Catholic: She Started It All,” a symposium in Granada celebrating Isabel in 2018, [Santiago] Abascal [leader of Spain’s *Vox* political party] remarked that Isabel should be recognized as [a] transcendental figure in Spanish history [...] not only responsible for the Reconquest, but also for saving Europe from Islamification and what is more, for giving Spain and humanity the greatest work of universal bonding that any country has ever done. [...] Abascal, who is seeking to stage a new “Reconquest” and to “Make Spain Great Again” by closing the country’s borders, finds a convenient historical model in Isabel. And, like so many devotees of Isabel before him, he echoes messianic sentiments about the queen.⁴⁸

We might well ask: how is this point of view even possible, given that Isabel established the Inquisition and expelled the Jews?

This is where we start to see the lines being blurred, as what would most logically be perceived as defects in her character are blatantly ‘spun’ by historiographers to the point that they almost seem like virtues. For example, Francomano describes how in the Spanish television series *Isabel*, “guilt for the Inquisition’s cruelty comes to rest squarely on the shoulders of the villain for all times: Torquemada. Isabel’s role in the expulsion and persecution of *judaizantes* is glossed over as a story of a personal relationship in which she keeps her promises, rather than as a concerted political strategy and religious ideology.”⁴⁹ The same holds true, she reports, for the recent TV series *Ministerio del Tiempo*, which portrays Isabel in a similar fashion: “Amelia [a character in the series] reaffirms the traditional view of Isabel, shared in the official cultural memories of the multiple temporalities the agents represent: ‘Isabel was always a woman of her word.’”⁵⁰ Boruchoff similarly acknowledges Isabel’s keenly felt sense of obligation: “Isabel used the probity, zeal, devotion, humility, selflessness, and sense of obligation found in her own self to argue the justice of her cause.”⁵¹ Apparently this “obligation” extended to genocide.

What might seem even more incredible are attempts to label Isabel as tolerant. But that is in fact what postmodern scholars and – even more

48 Francomano, “Isabel *la Católica* for the 21st Century,” 365.

49 Francomano, “Isabel *la Católica* for the 21st Century,” 353.

50 “Isabel siempre fue mujer de palabra.” *El Ministerio del Tiempo*, Season One, Episode Four.

51 Boruchoff, “Isabel, Her Chroniclers, and the Inquisition,” 56.

noticeably – recent politically correct portrayals of her in popular culture have tried to do. Returning to the *Isabel* TV show, Francomano estimates that

throughout the series – in fact, up until the final decision to expel the Jews from her realms – Isabel is shown rising above both the anti-Semitism and distrust of the *conversos* of her day. [Emily S.] Beck reviews key moments in the series that emphasize Isabel's tolerance: her discomfiture that the Christian mobs attacking *conversos* in Toledo must be allowed to do so if she values their allegiance in her brother's quest for the throne (Season One, Episode Four), and her eager acceptance of aid from the Jewish community while fighting a civil war for her own claims to the throne against her niece Juana's (Season Two, Episode Sixteen). The series imagines Isabel as a woman of exceptional broad-mindedness for cultural hybridity and devotion to *all* her subjects, no matter their religion. The series stresses that Fernando forced Isabel to agree to inaugurate the Spanish Inquisition (Season Two, Episodes 19 and 20).⁵²

Emily S. Beck concludes that the resulting portrayal of Isabel is “profoundly reorient[ing] the policies of the queen in the historical record.”⁵³ Cynics would call this “reorientation” sheer invention.

Along similar lines, the ultimate liberal virtue attributable to Queen Isabel in recent years has been the claim that she was a defender of human rights. While this assertion may be anathema to the political left, there is some historical evidence to support it. On 20 June 1500 Isabel prohibited slavery by a Real Provisión.⁵⁴ She never approved of the slave trade. In an essay for this volume, William Phillips confirms that “Isabel, alerted by church authorities, intervened and forced the investigation of the true status of Canarian slaves, allowing many of those who had been captured and sold illegally to be freed and return home. This intervention was a precedent for Isabel's actions in the Americas later, when she insisted on the rights of native people as subjects of the Castilian crown.”⁵⁵ Phillips continues this discussion precisely within the ‘New’ World context:

52 Francomano, “Isabel la Católica for the 21st Century,” 345.

53 Emily S. Beck, “Religious Medievalisms in RTVE's *Isabel*,” in *Premodern Rulers and (Post) modern Viewers*, ed. Karl Alvstad et al. (New York: 2018), 159–78, at 170–72.

54 Helen Nader, “Desperate Men, Questionable Acts: The Moral Dilemma of Italian Merchants in the Spanish Slave Trade,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 33.2 (2002): 401–22, at 401.

55 Manuel Lobo Cabrera, “La esclavitud del indígena canario,” *El Museo Canario* 552 (2000): 125–38.

Isabel was also greatly annoyed by Columbus's enslavement of people in the Caribbean islands. After long deliberations with her advisers, Isabel established the royal position on how the indigenous Americans were to be treated. She followed Canarian precedents in providing that the peoples of the Americas were subjects of the Castilian crown and were not to be enslaved in most circumstances. This was a step in the expansion of the categories of people not to be enslaved, which ultimately led to our modern rejection of any form of slavery.⁵⁶

Furthermore, in her last will and testament, Isabel added a codicil stipulating that the 'New' World indigenous peoples not be mistreated in their persons or their belongings, but instead treated justly and fairly.⁵⁷ This passage in a legal document has been described by some historians as the first declaration of human rights.

But obviously there is another side to the story. In recent years it has become fashionable both within scholarship and in popular culture to cast Isabel as a villain. As Macarena, an actress who is supposedly playing Isabel in the 2016 movie *La Reina de España*, exclaims: "I had the idea that this woman was a saint, when she was anything but. She threw the Jews out of Spain. She did the same thing with the Muslims. She organized the Inquisition. And on top of that she was a pig who swore never to wash until she won Granada back."⁵⁸ In truth, Isabel could not have been too pious, since she married Fernando on 19 October 1469 in all likelihood knowing that the papal dispensation for her to marry her cousin had been falsified. Furthermore, as John Edwards relates, she took advantage of unique exemptions made especially for her in the mortal sin department: "for the duration of her life [...] her confessors were granted the power to absolve her even of sins for which normally only the pope could grant absolution, should she ever commit them. This was a very exclusive spiritual insurance policy."⁵⁹ Edwards also avers that she and King Ferdinand removed bishops from their dioceses for political reasons to monitor their activities

56 William Phillips, "Isabel of Castile and the Opening of the Atlantic," 196-212 of the present volume, at 211.

57 "los yndios [...] reçiban agravio alguno en sus personas ni bienes, mas manden que sean bien y justamente tratados" (Quoted in Blanca Sáenz de Santa María Gómez-Mampaso, "Una visión sobre el testamento y el codicilo de Isabel la Católica," *Icade: Revista de la Facultad de Derecho* 63 [2004]: 113-52, at 132).

58 *La Reina de España*, dir. Fernando Trueba, Lolafilms, 2016.

59 John Edwards, "Windows into Souls: Isabel, Religion, and the Spanish Inquisition," 232-53 of the present volume, at 235.

instead of permitting them to stay where they could (and should) have been meeting the spiritual needs of their people.⁶⁰

Even Isabel's universally acknowledged virtues such as chastity were perhaps taken to an unhealthy extreme. Arguably, her obsession with chastity led to jealousy over Fernando's infidelities. Later on, Isabel's jealousy would be cited by her own daughter Juana as the model she had followed in her own possessive jealousy about the even more notorious unfaithfulness of her husband, Philip the Fair. This was the same frenzied jealousy that eventually led to Juana *la Loca's* madness and confinement for half a century in a convent at Tordesillas.⁶¹

In similar fashion, recent studies of material history have questioned Isabel's legendary asceticism. If she was so strictly severe, modest, and abstemious, then why do extant inventories of her belongings contain lengthy lists of costly garments and precious jewels? As art historian Jessica Weiss explains:

A similar criticism was even levelled against Isabel herself in a letter written in September of 1492 by Hernando de Talavera, her confessor and bishop of Granada. He criticized the queen after the celebrations of the treaty of Barcelona by implying a direct connection between the courtly excess of gifts, feasting, and sumptuous textiles with the dances and illicit mingling between French knights and Castilian women. Isabel defended the courtly displays, arguing that it was necessary to convey the impression that Castile was a strong and wealthy kingdom, foremost among the kingdoms of Europe and therefore not easily intimidated. The exchange between Isabel and Talavera reveals the complex and competing ideologies that affected the collection and use of material culture in the articulation of political power and monarchical identity in Renaissance Iberia.⁶²

At the same time – and paradoxically – the feminine Isabel who wore beautiful dresses was accused of being too masculine, even to the point of dominating her husband (who is not, for his part, customarily portrayed as a wilting violet). This contest of strong personalities seems to have led to what some

60 Edwards, "Windows into Souls," 241.

61 The historian Manuel Fernández Álvarez says of the Princess Juana, "le hizo arrojarle con tanta furia en la vida amorosa [...] le haría entrar en el infierno de los celos, siguiendo aquí el ejemplo, en parte, de lo que había sufrido su madre, la reina Isabel" (Manuel Fernández Álvarez, *Juana la Loca (1479–1555)* [Palencia: 1994], 124).

62 Weiss, "Art Patronized and Collected by Queen Isabel," 157.

contemporaneous observers considered to be an excess of courage or fortitude. A case in point would be Isabel's harangue aimed at Fernando's troops as well as at Fernando himself after their retreat at Toro. While traditionally most historians of Spain have relied upon Castilian chronicles from the period, Michelle Hamilton takes the novel approach of reading Jewish and Arabic chronicles from the same era to see what they have to say about Isabel. Curiously, these texts seem to reinforce the picture of Isabel as a manly woman: "[Eliyahu] Capsali [...] says explicitly that Fernando decided to expel the Jews because it was Isabel's will."⁶³ Here Hamilton summarizes the view of a Jewish historian who framed the expulsion within an Old Testament narrative taken from the Book of Esther. In that tale, King Ahasuerus of Babylon is swayed by an evil adviser named Haman to slaughter the Jews living in their midst as captives. In a fascinating attribution to Isabel of masculine motives and actions, the Jewish chronicler Capsali equates Isabel not with Queen Esther (who interceded with the Babylonian king for her people, the Jews) but instead with Haman. In a different analogy, Capsali draws a parallel between Isabel and her Old Testament namesake, the flamboyant Queen Jezabel, a Sidonian married to the Israelite King Ahab: "In Capsali's narrative Fernando is [...] portrayed as a Jewish king or a king of Jewish descent who falls under the sway of – and plays second fiddle to – his evil, Gentile (i.e. non-Jewish) queen."⁶⁴ This interpretation relies upon a privileged knowledge of Fernando's genealogy – which did, in fact, include Jewish ancestors. Intriguingly, Francomano reports that the depiction of Isabel as controlling or domineering makes its way also into popular culture, such as the recent Spanish TV series *Ministry of Time*: "Isabel [...] is heard off-screen berating Cisneros: 'How many times have I said that nothing may be done without my permission? I am the Ruler of Castile, not my husband!' Julián, overhearing, remarks, 'What a pain in the neck that woman is!'"⁶⁵

Again paradoxically, however, from other quarters we hear reports of Isabel playing the woman card by exploiting her own perceived female 'weakness' selectively to personal advantage. For example, David Boruchoff comments on her use of illness to win sympathy from none other than the pope in an instance (not an isolated event) when she saw fit to criticize him for disagreeing with

63 Michelle Hamilton, "Hostile Histories: Isabel and Fernando in Jewish and Muslim Narratives," 213–31 of the present volume, at 228.

64 Hamilton, "Hostile Histories," 218.

65 "¿Cuántas veces he dicho que no se haga nada sin mi consentimiento? [...] La reina de Castilla soy yo, no mi esposo!"; "¡Vaya carácter tiene esta mujer!" (*El Ministerio de Tiempo*, Season One, Episode Four; quoted in Francomano, "Isabel la Católica for the 21st Century," 352).

her: "In the same vein, her mention of a bout of fever is seemingly designed to gain the pope's sympathy before she criticizes his failure to act as she asserts that he ought."⁶⁶ This apparently self-serving maneuver would be in accord with other actions historians such as David Boruchoff have identified as egotistical or even avaricious:

In light of Castile's depleted treasury when Isabel ascended the throne and the expense of war, first with her niece Juana's partisans, then with Portugal and finally with Granada, there is ample reason to question the queen's repeated protestations of financial disinterest and of always setting God's service above her own. Opponents of the newly instituted Inquisition were quick to observe that the confiscation of property not only from convicted heretics, but from others whose cases were still pending, particularly *conversos* accused or suspected of apostasy, benefitted the crown perhaps more than it did the faith.⁶⁷

As Boruchoff confirms, "the specter of predation hung over the Inquisition from the start."⁶⁸ This perceived self-interest extended not only to Inquisitorial confiscations of goods from those accused of heresy and their families, but also to the papal tax collected from the spoils of the Reconquest and other crusades: "Isabel repeatedly insists that Geraldino tell the pope that her request to keep the third normally given to him from *cruzadas* is not due to greed."⁶⁹ Perhaps the lady doth protest too much.

This alternative picture that begins to emerge of Isabel as power-hungry and greedy is partially confirmed by the allegation that she effectively stole the crown from her niece Juana, known to history as *La Beltraneja* based on accusations that she was really sired by her father's favorite, Beltrán de la Cueva. We catch a fascinating glimpse of this Isabel-as-ambitious-usurper in Emily Francomano's analysis of a scene from the Spanish TV series *Ministry of Time*: "Levi [the TV Isabel's Jewish minister] [...] explains that he is offering her the chance to be 'the queen of time,' a prospect that brings a power-hungry gleam to her eyes."⁷⁰

In fact, when taken to an extreme, this alternative vision leads to new depths of dystopia in the historiographical record, in which Isabel is seen not

66 Boruchoff, "Isabel, Her Chroniclers, and the Inquisition," 53 note 60.

67 Boruchoff, "Isabel, Her Chroniclers, and the Inquisition," 42.

68 Boruchoff, "Isabel, Her Chroniclers, and the Inquisition," 43.

69 Boruchoff, "Isabel, Her Chroniclers, and the Inquisition," 54 note 64.

70 Francomano, "Isabel *la Católica* for the 21st Century," 349.

as a redeemer of her people, but instead an agent of the devil. As Hamilton paraphrases the Jewish chronicler Eliyahu Capsali,

in Capsali's narrative Isabel is given an active role as anti-Semitic agent of evil in the tradition of Amelek and Haman [...]. [I]n one of the earliest histories of the Sephardic diaspora – far from being a just and wise redeemer of her people – she is portrayed as an agent of diabolical evil, in league with the Devil.⁷¹

The immediate context for this dystopic view was, of course, the Jewish expulsion, which Jewish authors criticize fiercely. The mythical Isabel who was “always a woman of her word” is not the same one encountered by her Jewish subjects, who found out to their chagrin that their partial financing of the Reconquest and their physical presence at court as some of Isabel's trusted administrators and top advisers was not enough to buy her clemency when the time came to convert to Catholicism or else leave Spain. The Jews did not find her to be trustworthy, but instead fickle and unreliable.

In a parallel rhetorical vein, under the right circumstances, historians nowadays often reverse the laudatory adjectives we are accustomed to hearing and instead denounce her as harsh, rigid, or lacking in compassion. John Edwards unpacks these subtle distinctions:

[T]he paradox, from the viewpoint of later centuries, [is] that she regarded the violence involved in the Inquisition's work as necessary, even though there is ample evidence that she could, in other circumstances – such as her care for her own family and her apparently genuine concern for the well-being of her subjects – appear kind and even compassionate.⁷²

Roger Boase echoes the contrasting perception of her reputed severity.⁷³ An example frequently cited is the time when she personally meted out royal justice in the turbulent city of Seville. In this instance and others, what was perceived by Christians as harshness or rigidity in Isabel's administration of justice was viewed by Jews and Muslims as intolerance, dogmatism, or even fundamentalist fanaticism. And this brings us to the topic of the Inquisition.

⁷¹ Hamilton, “Hostile Histories,” 214.

⁷² Edwards, “Windows into Souls,” 251.

⁷³ “[Isabel] took her judicial role very seriously as she travelled through her realms.” Boase, “Ludic Dimensions of Courtly Love,” 158.

The issue of the Inquisition is one which modern-day historians dare not tiptoe around. Instead, they must confront it with excruciating candor. In his fine essay in this volume, “Windows into Souls,” John Edwards does not mince words:

The entire enterprise of the Inquisition does [...] raise serious moral questions, including the question of Isabel’s responsibility for what happened [...] In order to be treated leniently, Christians had to come forward not only to confess their own ‘errors’ but also those of their neighbors, thus creating a climate of fear and suspicion which would influence Spanish society and damage the reputation of Spain abroad for centuries to come.⁷⁴

For her part, Francomano tersely rebukes Isabel for seeing “the eradication of religious difference as salvation.”⁷⁵

For many scholars today, Isabel has been judged guilty in the court of popular opinion on multiple counts of human rights violations. Francomano decries right-wing Spanish politicians’ attempts to “absolve Isabel for any atrocities associated with the expulsion and Inquisition,” mentioning the Spanish government’s efforts to make reparations to Sephardic Jews’ descendants.⁷⁶ As she notes, a Spanish law was passed in June 2015, establishing a brief window for descendants of Jews expelled from Spain to apply for Spanish citizenship.⁷⁷ Some believe that Spain’s government ought to offer reparations likewise to descendants of the Inquisition’s victims.

In fairness, some of these critiques of Isabel seem fully justified. But other voices raised in her opprobrium seem to indulge in a kind of benefit of hindsight which this time-bound historical personage could not possibly have enjoyed. For instance, there is the charge that she sponsored ‘New’ World exploration voyages that ultimately led to the demise of indigenous populations. Let us not forget that Christopher Columbus himself likely died believing he had merely reached India by an alternative route, which is why the Caribbean islands are still called the West Indies. Only medical doctors with today’s knowledge of epidemiology could possibly have foretold that previously unknown diseases would wipe out entire ‘New’ World populations simply because their immune

⁷⁴ Edwards, “Windows into Souls,” 249.

⁷⁵ Francomano, “Isabel *la Católica* for the 21st Century,” 365.

⁷⁶ Francomano, “Isabel *la Católica* for the 21st Century” 362.

⁷⁷ LEY 12/2015, *Boletín oficial del estado*, 151, de 25 de junio de 2015. https://www.boe.es/dia_rio_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-2015-7045.

systems were defenseless without prior exposure. Thus, William Phillips makes reference to Isabel's memory being tarnished by "infamy over the centuries."⁷⁸ Historians must remain vigilantly aware of the danger of refashioning medieval and Renaissance people into our own postmodern image.

Additionally, while it is extremely unfortunate that the cultural capital which is Isabel has been appropriated and manipulated by Franco's Fascistic dictatorship, the subsequent use of one's legacy is something no historical figure (by definition) can ultimately control. Francomano quite rightly points out that

the campaign to canonize Isabel has been a top-down ecclesiastical and state operation from its very beginnings [...]. The campaign to canonize Isabel is driven by the Comisión Isabel la Católica, an organization headed by the Archbishopric of Valladolid and backed by other, largely very conservative groups and members of the Catholic Church, including Opus Dei and Miles Jesu [...]. [T]he Comisión Isabel la Católica has maintained the tacit support of successive conservative governments, even after repeated rebuffs from the Vatican.⁷⁹

The fact that this sainthood campaign seems to be going nowhere⁸⁰ appears to confirm that the leadership of the Catholic Church, at least, sees Isabel in a more balanced historical perspective.

Indisputably there is an element of romantic mythification in play here. Travalía states unequivocally that "the tendency in works about the Catholic Monarchs has been, until now, to romanticize the couple and their reign."⁸¹ Lest we stray into the error of believing that there is some sort of oceanic divide between American and European historians in their treatment of Isabel and Ferdinand, it should be noted that Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada,

⁷⁸ Phillips, "Isabel of Castile and the Opening of the Atlantic," 196.

⁷⁹ Francomano, "Isabel la Católica for the 21st Century," 361.

⁸⁰ "In 1991 [...] Pope John Paul II stopped the beatification process at the petition of the Vatican's Council for Christian Unity, insofar as Isabel's actions were thought to contradict the 'Declaration on Religious Freedom *Dignitatis Humanae* on the Right of the Person and of Communities to Social and Civil Freedom in Matters Religious Promulgated by his Holiness Pope Paul VI on December 7, 1965 [...].' [I]n 2002 there was not just opposition to Isabel's beatification by one third of the bishops on the Vatican Council, but also an incisive censure by the Asamblea de Andalucía" (Susan L. Fischer, "[Re]Performing Isabel la Católica: Pious Cruelty, Saintly Hypocrisy, and Lope de Vega's *El niño inocente de la Guardia*." *Comedia Performance* 18.1 [2021]: 22–47, at 24).

⁸¹ Travalía, "The Legend of Isabel la Católica, Founder of Spain," 317.

a respected Spanish historian, shares this iconoclastic view. He issued the following pronouncement: “The singular importance of that reign and what took place during it is, without a doubt, the continuous flow of mythification that came out of it.”⁸² And lest we fall into the mistake of thinking that this is an obscure historical debate without real-life consequences, we would do well to heed the timely warning by Caroline Travalia: “Problems surrounding nationalism in Spain today – particularly with regard to Catalonia and the Basque Country – can be traced back, at least in part, to the achievements of Isabel *la Católica* and the perpetuation of her myth.”⁸³ It is hard to imagine an issue of greater political relevance.

This is why so many scholars have begun to question whether the myth of Isabel (and also Ferdinand) matches the reality. As Núria Silleras-Fernández remarks, “the honorific title of ‘the Catholic Monarchs’ in 1496 [was] a label that sealed their reputation as zealous Catholics, although this did not necessarily correspond to their historical personas.”⁸⁴ David Boruchoff almost sounds a bit defensive on this topic when he backpedals away from going out on too long of a limb: “I do not mean to suggest that Isabel did not measure up to the supremely virtuous *persona* projected to overcome resistance to her aspirations at home and abroad.”⁸⁵ But that is, of course, exactly what he does suggest, as do other historians who have begun to perceive the urgency of their task.

Núria Silleras-Fernández offers a salutary corrective to those who would accuse historians of being mere acolytes charged with polishing Isabel’s halo. She points out that Isabel was rebuked by ministers of the Catholic Church for her sins even within her own lifetime. Especially during her “decade of sorrow” when her son, daughter, and grandson all died, the logical consequence for so pious a woman was that she thought God was punishing her for her own sins. By reading consolatory treatises written by these churchmen, Silleras-Fernández uncovers a counter-discourse available within the period that does not participate in the epideictic rhetoric so characteristic of, say, the royal chroniclers (who after all, resided at court and were on the queen’s payroll).

82 “La importancia singular que, sin duda, tuvo aquel reinado y la trascendencia futura de muchos sucesos que ocurrieron en él, han producido un continuo flujo de mitificación” (Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada, *Los Reyes Católicos: La corona y la unidad de España* [Valencia: 1989], 20).

83 Travalia, “The Legend of Isabel *la Católica*, Founder of Spain,” 337.

84 Silleras-Fernández, “Isabel’s Years of Sorrow: Consoling the Catholic Queen,” 254–78 of the present volume, at 256.

85 Boruchoff, “Isabel, Her Chroniclers, and the Inquisition,” 70.

As Silleras-Fernández summarizes the admonitory message conveyed by this counter-discourse:

Isabel had received many mercies from God, and now she was being punished [by her children's deaths]. This required her to reflect on her past and present offenses against God. It was a common approach for clergymen and confessors to remind even rulers that God was above them.⁸⁶

What is even more surprising than this not-so-thinly-veiled criticism of Isabel is how her response to it is imagined within these texts' fictional dialogue. Instead of defending herself, this imagined literary Isabel humbly agrees:

In the dialogue, rather than take umbrage at the idea that she or her ancestors are responsible for this punishment from God, [Alfonso] Ortiz has Isabel agree: 'no one doubts that children are punished for the sins of their parents.'⁸⁷ [...]. [T]he notion that God might be punishing the Catholic Monarchs through these deaths is raised explicitly by Íñigo de Mendoza and Alfonso Ortiz. This idea suggested a critique not only of the morality of the monarchs but of Cardinal Cisneros, to whom Ortiz dedicated his treatise.⁸⁸

Silleras-Fernández ends her essay on a somber note: "if they [the ecclesiastical writers of these treatises] and their Early Modern readers were to judge the outcome of the Catholic Monarchs' reign, they might indeed see their fate as a manifestation of God's retribution that would last for generations."⁸⁹ Perhaps Isabel did not get off scot-free after all.

When we deal with any historical figure, there is inevitably an element of self-fashioning in play for which we must make some allowance. This is a point on which nearly all the authors contributing to this volume concur. Isabel's self-fashioning began with the chronicles she paid court historians to write,

86 Silleras-Fernández, "Isabel's Years of Sorrow," 271-72.

87 "no duda nadie que los hijos son punidos por los pecados de los padres" (Alfonso Ortiz, *Tratado del fallecimiento del muy ínclito Señor Don Juan*, in *El humanismo cristiano en la corte de los Reyes Católicos: las consolatorias latinas a la muerte del Príncipe Juan de Diego de Muros*, Bernardino López de Carvajal-García de Bovadilla, Diego Ramírez de Villaescusa y Alfonso Ortiz, ed. Tomás González Rolán et al. [Madrid: 2006], 68).

88 Silleras-Fernández, "Isabel's Years of Sorrow," 276.

89 Silleras-Fernández, "Isabel's Years of Sorrow," 278.

the content of which she invariably supervised.⁹⁰ Michelle Hamilton recalls: “‘From the moment of her accession, she set out to craft a master narrative of her reign,’ replacing the court historians with ones she hand-picked and then paying them generously.”⁹¹ Her epistolary self-presentation became a similarly agonistic arena:

Both directly in her letters, and indirectly in what she instructed her solicitors to say to the Pope, Isabel used the probity, zeal, devotion, humility, selflessness and sense of obligation found in her own self to argue the justice of her cause [...]. Isabel’s correspondence with the Holy See features numerous instances of such epideictic persuasion.⁹²

In an earlier study, David Boruchoff had described this phenomenon with an apt phrase: the “transmutation of pietistic rhetoric into historical fact,” which he claims began very early in the historical record and then kept being repeated across the centuries.⁹³ Even in an area so apparently non-controversial as artistic patronage and collectorship, Jessica Weiss identifies Isabel’s erudition and devotion as essential aspects of her self-fashioning.⁹⁴ Silleras-Fernández concurs: “Isabel took a deliberate hand in creating this image, a self-fashioning as a strong and virtuous monarch who wielded real power but was nevertheless also a devout wife and mother[...]. She needed the collaboration of her subjects, and therefore, had at the very least to ‘seem’ to respect the patriarchal order.”⁹⁵ As David Boruchoff sums up the situation, “the rhetoric that Isabel used to bend others to her will continues to influence how she is remembered.”⁹⁶

We must now return to the question of virtue and whether it is ever truly knowable. As I mused in *Ambiguous Antidotes* with regard to Virtue’s literary portrayals:

90 Francomano offers a list of these hand-picked, less-than-objective chroniclers: “the queen worked assiduously to craft her own image, aided by the writers in her employ: Enríquez del Castillo, Hernando del Pulgar, Diego de Valera, and Juan de Flores” (Francomano, “Isabel la Católica for the 21st Century,” 340–41).

91 Hamilton, “Hostile Histories,” 214, quoting Weissberger, *Isabel Rules*, 71.

92 Boruchoff, “Isabel, Her Chroniclers, and the Inquisition,” 57. See the examples in David A. Boruchoff, “Introduction: Instructions for Sainthood and Other Feminine Wiles in the Historiography of Isabel I,” in *Isabel la Católica, Queen of Castile: Critical Essays*, ed. David Boruchoff (New York: 2003), 1–23.

93 Boruchoff, “Introduction,” 13.

94 Weiss, “Art Patronized and Collected by Queen Isabel,” 150.

95 Silleras-Fernández, “Isabel’s Years of Sorrow,” 255.

96 Boruchoff, “Isabel, Her Chroniclers, and the Inquisition,” 71.

[T]he place for Virtue is in the middle. Virtue should not be too extreme. But how can we find the midpoint between two Vices with absolutely mathematical precision? Is it not feasible that most attempts at virtuous action would err on one side or the other? And does that not make Virtue potentially a *pharmakon*, or ambiguous antidote – at once poison and cure?⁹⁷

If this is the case, then Isabel is by definition both saint and sinner: a Virgin-like villain. Both sides are right ... and wrong. At the same time.

Silleras-Fernández points out that Isabel tended to be described as exceptional by her contemporaries, which means that even within her own lifetime, she defied the Aristotelian mean. In addition to the potentially proto-feminist Isabel, there is the political one. Isabel's ideas of patriotic nationalism have proven deeply consequential for today's fractured political reality in Spain:

The historical obsession for Spanish national unity which began with Isabel has perhaps been one of the reasons why politicians and individuals have refused to consider the possibility of the existence of multiple nations and multiple identities in Spain.⁹⁸

Politician, tragic hero, proto-feminist, or virginal villain – Isabel is all these things, and more.

We shall end the first part of our introductory reflections with the wise words of Peggy Liss: “Isabel's fictions – some that she believed in, others that seemed politically useful, all of them clothed in religion – had historic consequences, influenced history and became part of it. Her own interpretation of history fell on fertile ground and flourished for centuries.”⁹⁹ Emily Francomano proclaims, “Isabel's iconicity is infinitely pliable.”¹⁰⁰ Perhaps pliable iconicity goes hand-in-hand with unknowable virtue.

97 Kallendorf, *Ambiguous Antidotes*, 35.

98 Travalia, “The Legend of Isabel *la Católica*, Founder of Spain,” 337.

99 Peggy Liss, “Isabel *la Católica*: Topics and Topicality,” *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 85 (2008): 259–283, at 67.

100 Francomano, “Isabel *la Católica* for the 21st Century,” 366.

2 Isabel's Queenship

If her virtue (or lack thereof) is ultimately unknowable, what can studying the reign of Isabel *la Católica* teach us? Why should we bother? What *can* we know about her without getting lost in a carnival fun house of distorted mirrors or drowning in a postmodern sea of uncertainty?

In the last few decades, feminist historians have begun to question the assumptions of masculinist historiography.¹⁰¹ In doing so, they have launched a new field of inquiry called “queenship studies.” One of its pioneers, Theresa Earenfight, describes the contours of this new field thus:

Queenship research, rooted in feminist and gender theories, describes practices of queenship in western Europe from late antiquity to the Renaissance in terms of marriage, motherhood, court ceremonial, sexuality, religion, literature, art history and [...] political authority. But it is a disparate body of work, and difficult to categorise. Politically powerful queens appear in some periods and places and not in others [...]. The issue [...] is not that some queens were exceptions to the rule, but that there were few fixed rules governing queenship practices, leaving an impression that queenship was atomised, ad hoc and lacking coherence, order or logic.¹⁰²

101 Theresa Earenfight describes this revisionist stance: “we risk missing variations in practice . . . glossed over by modern historians who saw the structure of monarchy as kings themselves wished it to be seen and did not question the veracity of the depiction nor seek to explain practices that did not correspond to the image of monarchy as solely the domain of kings” (Earenfight, “Preface: Partners in Politics,” in *Queenship and Political Power in Medieval and Early Modern Spain*, ed. Theresa Earenfight [Hampshire: 2005], XIII–XXVIII, at XXVI). Charles Beem elaborates further: “While historians, most of them men, in the past identified narrow parameters in their definitions of queenly power, feminist historians have broadened this scope, rejecting more traditional notions that only located the exercise of power within the public and formalized spaces of royal government and administration. Instead, feminist historians have identified those more informal or private spaces where queenly power and influence was routinely exercised, in terms of marriage brokering, educating their children, running their royal households, managing their estates, directing the distribution of patronage, patronizing prominent artists and scholars who created forms of material culture with visual and literary representations of queenly power, and setting examples of queenly piety and charity” (Charles Beem, *Queenship in Early Modern Europe* [Cham, Switzerland: 2020], 12).

102 Theresa Earenfight, “Without the *Persona* of the Prince: Kings, Queens and the Idea of Monarchy in Late Medieval Europe,” *Gender & History* 19 (2007): 1–21, at 1–2.

These scholars define queenship as an office¹⁰³ – albeit a supremely ambiguous one¹⁰⁴ – and refuse to concentrate their attention only on “hard power” exercised by men and limited to the public sphere. Despite their assertions that queens should be studied not so much individually as in the aggregate, in practice some of the best recent work in this field has taken case studies of individual queens as a point of departure and used these to draw out recurring themes or larger patterns which might be applicable to other powerful women. It is to this burgeoning field of queenship studies that this new volume about Isabel stands to make the greatest contribution.

In “Isabel, Her Chroniclers and the Inquisition: Self-Fashioning and Historical Memory,” David A. Boruchoff employs the, by now ubiquitous, New

103 The scholar who first posited the idea of queenship as an office was Marion Facinger: “[S]omewhere behind the transitory, behind the multiple roles played by the individual personalities, there lay an office with prerogatives, norms, limits within which each incumbent functioned.” Marion Facinger, “A Study of Medieval Queenship: Capetian France 987–127,” *Nebraska Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History* 5 (1968): 3–47, at 3. More recently, this has also been the stance taken by Heather Tanner: “The coronation *ordo*, including the queen’s reception of a scepter, its implications regularly restated by crown-wearings, clearly implies that queenship was an office and that the queen had a role in the realm’s governance.” Heather Tanner, “Queenship: Office, Custom, or *Ad Hoc*? The Case of Queen Matilda 111,” in *Eleanor of Aquitaine, Lord and Lady*, ed. Bonnie Wheeler and John Carmi Parsons (Basingstoke: 2003), 133–58, at 135.

104 Marion Facinger posits some possible reasons for this ambiguity: “Perhaps because it was never questioned, the need did not arise for developing a formal elaboration of the queen’s regal rights; therefore the shape of the office always remained ambiguous.” Facinger, “A Study of Medieval Queenship,” 32. Theresa Earenfight likewise employs this adjective: “as an institution, queenship was inherently ambiguous, uneasily balanced between public authority and private influence, between governance and subjugation.” Theresa Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe* (New York: 2013), 27. Adding to the confusion, this scholar in fact seems not to accept fully the designation of queenship as an office. She asks: “[W]hat precisely is queenship? An institution? An office? A job description? A social role? A domestic function? Is a queen a wife, a mother, the tutor of her children? Is she the manager of household accounts? An intercessor, a patron of the church, the moral conscience of her husband? A peacemaker, and at times a political partner with her husband?” (Earenfight, “Without the *Persona*,” 6). In a different publication, however, she offers the following working definition of queenship: “a repertoire of collective norms, institutional structures, and strategies for participation within the public political sphere of monarchy that included, but was not limited to, governance” (Earenfight, “Preface,” xvi). In still a different essay she refers to queenship as more of a spectrum: “queenship encompassed a spectrum of ruling practices bounded by two extremes, a queen ruling in her own right and outright prohibition of female rulership. Most queens, however, occupied the middle zone between these two poles” (Theresa Earenfight, “Absent Kings: Queens as Political Partners in the Medieval Crown of Aragon,” in *Queenship and Political Power*, ed. Earenfight, 33–51).

Historical concept of self-fashioning to explore how Isabel herself – especially through the chronicles she commissioned to document her reign – managed to project an image of herself which was uniquely conducive to her own political success. Boruchoff’s fairly radical revisionist stance argues that far too often, subsequent historians have taken the chroniclers’ words at face value, failing to take into account the fact that their content might have been shaped by the lady who paid their bills (as Pauline Stafford notes, “the link between the exercise of women’s power and its presentation is a two-way process”).¹⁰⁵ The consequences of his work for queenship studies are enormous: until we learn to bring the tools of literary analysis to the historiographical project, we will continue to be hoodwinked by the very rhetorical flourish and selective reporting which Isabel as queen “leaned on” her chroniclers to employ. It is this exercise of “soft power”¹⁰⁶ which most interests us here. Hopefully, in the future, scholars will attempt to unravel the complex interwoven threads of discourse in Isabel’s and other queens’ commissioned royal chronicles of their reigns with less naïveté.

In “The Learning of Ladies in the Isabelline Court,” Elizabeth Teresa Howe heeds the healthy admonition of queenship studies scholars that we need to study powerful women in the aggregate, not just individually:

A methodological move that shifts the focus from a singular queen to the study of queens in the plural opens up the vantage points and allows us to analyze queenship comparatively, across borders, to discern similarities and differences. In so doing, the entire field of monarchy opens

¹⁰⁵ Pauline Stafford, “More than a Man, or Less than a Woman? Women Rulers in Early Modern Europe,” *Gender & History* 7 (1995): 486–90, at 490. Susan Fischer goes so far as to consider medieval royal chronicles that age’s equivalent of today’s fake news: “Given the image [...] that Isabel contrived, reified in the propaganda set down by servile chroniclers whose livelihoods depended on her approval, it is hardly surprising that students of her life and works, both medieval and modern, have struggled to separate fact from fiction regarding her reign. If the lies and deliberate misinformation that make up fake news present a challenge for our post-modern age, such factors were hardly absent as the queen endeavored to propagate her version of history” (Fischer, “(Re)Performing Isabel,” 25).

¹⁰⁶ In the context of medieval elite women, Heather J. Tanner et al. contrast the “soft” power of diplomacy and social pressure with the “hard” power of martial authority; they also mention “non-institutional means of ruling such as intercession, ritual, emotional performances, and gift-giving” (Heather J. Tanner et al., “Introduction,” in *Medieval Elite Women and the Exercise of Power, 1100–1400*, ed. Heather J. Tanner [Cham, Switzerland: 2019], 1–18, at 2, 6). Theresa Earenfight refers to the arenas of “soft power” as “more subtle or private locations of political power and authority” and reminds us that “politics has both official and unofficial avenues” (Earenfight, “Preface,” xv).

up to include the entire royal family, not simply the person sitting center-stage.¹⁰⁷

By looking not just at Isabel's own much-vaunted erudition, but also that of multiple other women who surrounded her, Howe helps us understand how queens and other noble women could leverage education – particularly Latin literacy and a knowledge of the classics – to their advantage.¹⁰⁸ Isabel both made possible the education of other women and, by learning Latin later in her life, became a personal model for them to follow. But these other women in her entourage gave her something as well: by their notable erudition, they made her own educational aspirations stand out as less odd. In *Medieval Elite Women and the Exercise of Power, 1100–1400: Moving beyond the Exceptionalist Debate*,¹⁰⁹ Heather J. Tanner and her collaborators rightly point out that even in the medieval period, powerful women were the rule, not the exception. But there is always strength in numbers, and Isabel wisely crafted for herself a little extra insurance policy by making sure that she was not the only woman at the Spanish court who had a reputation for being a bookworm.

In fact, the picture of a woman with a book in her hands became so familiar at Isabel's court that it solidified into an art historical tradition. In her chapter, "Isabel I of Castile and Saintly Propaganda: Interpreting the St. Anne Retable in the *Capilla del Condestable*," Cristina Guardiola-Griffiths connects the female saints depicted in this altarpiece she commissioned to Isabel's ownership and patronage of the hagiographical vernacular genre known as *santorales*. By associating both herself and learning with sainthood, Isabel undoubtedly furthered her ambitious educational agenda; but she also paved the way for future women to justify book ownership and time spent reading.

The next essay in the volume likewise explores Isabel's exercise of "soft power" through patronage, but this time of more traditionally defined *objets d'art*. These included tapestries (particularly important for the mobility of an itinerant court), paintings, elaborately decorated precious metals, and other luxury items. As queenship scholars have noted,

107 Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe*, 125. The recent book that demonstrates most effectively an implementation of this new methodology is Miriam Shadis's *Berenguela of Castile (1180–1246) and Political Women in the High Middle Ages* (New York: 2009), with separate chapters devoted to different women in successive generations of a single royal family.

108 As Charles Beem notes, "Literacy and learning [...] had long been effective tools for female rulers to combat their 'natural' female inadequacies." Beem, *Queenship*, 223.

109 Tanner (ed.), *Medieval Elite Women*.

Some of the best sources about queens are material objects [...]. They used gifts and gift-giving as an expression of both piety and power [...]. Archaeologists analyze artifacts from houses, tombs, palace complexes and the like to reveal not only how a queen lived, but also how she wanted to be remembered. Household accounts and inventories of possessions at a queen's death provide vivid and often moving details of a life lived among loved ones, with tapestries, bed sheets, fur cloaks, glassware, books, yards of fabric, hair ornaments, jewelry, and yes, crowns all duly noted [...]. A bit of silk tunic, an embroidered silk pillow, a signature on a letter, a prayer book, a crystal vase, an enameled reliquary and a ring all speak eloquently about what it meant to be a queen, what concerned a woman and what mattered to her.¹¹⁰

Unfortunately, due to the rapid dispersal of many of these items after her death – beginning with an auction held soon after she died, at which many of her personal belongings were sold – much of this material culture has been lost to us, so all we have available are the descriptions in inventories. She left a more lasting material legacy through her patronage of large-scale architectural projects such as the chapter house at Miraflores and the Monastery of San Juan de los Reyes in Toledo. As Charles Beem notes, “[t]he ability to create representations of their queenships was a form of ‘soft power’ in which subjects were persuaded to support the regime by the messages embedded in commissioned works of art and building projects such as churches and monasteries.”¹¹¹ Isabel's construction of the aforementioned monastery, in part as a tribute to her father, illustrates her participation in what queenship studies scholars call “her special role as [...] mourner-in-chief.”¹¹² The emotional labor of mourning the dead was delegated to – and performed disproportionately by – noble women:

Mourning and the burial of family members were political roles played by the queens of Castile [...]. [B]urial could be used by queens to demonstrate political power. The building of mausoleums and the rituals associated with mourning and memorialization were important avenues for queens to exploit in the creation and preservation of political space, as well as for them to assert status as members of a lineage.¹¹³

110 Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe*, 23–24.

111 Beem, *Queenship*, 8.

112 Shadis, *Berenguela of Castile*, 158.

113 Shadis, *Berenguela of Castile*, 151, 158, 159.

These lines written by a scholar about one of Isabel's female ancestors hold equally true for the Catholic Queen.

On a cheerier note, Roger Boase in his chapter "Ludic Dimensions of Courtly Love at the Court of Isabel *la Católica*" once again emphasizes the communal or corporate nature of elite power as wielded by women, especially in their role as objects of courtly love. His fascinating, pioneering work on a specific card game played by groups of lords and ladies at Isabel's court offers us a glimpse into a world of intimate gossip and risqué intrigue.¹¹⁴ The power of noble women to command faithful obedience from their suitors was exemplified by the great lengths to which these suitors went to shield the identities of the ladies they courted in layer after layer of clever riddles and enigmas. The extension of this culture of witty invention into related realms such as jousting and heraldic devices shows just how pervasive noble women's subtle power was in terms of controlling both the rules and the outcomes of these playful – yet at the same time, deadly serious – recreational activities. The stakes were high because even one slip-up could place a woman's honor (arguably, her most precious commodity) in jeopardy.

Speaking of commodities, the next essay in this collection literalizes that term to explore the role of queenship in establishing new trading networks. As queenship scholars have noted, queens in general served as international ambassadors and diplomats: "queens were drawn from a peripatetic class of women who functioned as the great pollinators of European culture and society."¹¹⁵ Queen Isabel's own family background in Portugal made her particularly well-positioned as a vessel to bring Portuguese maritime knowledge to mostly landlocked Castile. Incremental steps such as renewed attention to southern port cities and securing royal control over the Canary Islands were a prelude to her larger expansionist ambitions, according to William D. Phillips. In his essay "Isabel of Castile and the Opening of the Atlantic," this scholar credits Isabel's queenship with inspiring in Spaniards a new openness to exploration. He describes this change as an "opening," more accurately seen as a mental paradigm shift than anything else. Queens have a subtle power to influence cultural attitudes.

114 Charles Beem comments on the apparent contradictions inherent in Isabel's promotion of such leisurely pastimes: "Isabella encouraged a dialogue that employed gallantry, flowery praise, and the language of courtly love [...]. Isabella's confessors had a difficult time adjusting to such Renaissance forms of courtly life, which Isabella assured them was part and parcel of maintaining a successful queenship." Beem, *Queenship*, 17.

115 Beem, *Queenship*, 2.

Isabel's queenship did not prove "open" in all respects, though. Her heavy-handed, dogmatic way of ruling could be singularly closed-minded when it came to the topic of religion. In her essay "Hostile Histories: Isabel and Fernando in Jewish and Muslim Narratives," Michelle Hamilton takes an ingenious back-door approach to demonstrating just how much, in contrast, Isabel must have influenced her chroniclers. Her style of queenship comes across as infinitely more forceful and domineering in these alternative accounts written from the perspective of the "Other." It is tantalizing to glimpse to what extent royal chroniclers writing from a Christian perspective must have softened the image of a woman ruling in her own right who actively practiced ethnic cleansing.

One of the particular mechanisms Isabel utilized in the practice of her queenship was the institutional apparatus of the Holy Inquisition. In "Windows into Souls: Isabel, Religion, and the Spanish Inquisition," John Edwards takes a broader view of her involvement with fostering the specific (and gruesome) activities for which the Inquisition is notorious in his exploration of other aspects of royal religiosity. These areas include pious charity (i.e. the giving of alms), the doling out of mercy by extending pardons on Good Friday (a custom which imitated Jesus's pardoning the repentant thief hanging next to Him at the crucifixion), and the staffing of the Royal Chapel with chaplains who would support the queen's regime. In an age when the personal practice of religion was so highly politicized, Isabel's queenship made it even more so due to the special privileges she received from the pope. As Janna Bianchini explains,

Many women who came to power in the Middle Ages found that alliance with the Church offered them valuable protection [...]. [A] woman who was considered virtuous by the Church – who lived piously and patronized religious institutions – could atone for a host of other failings in the opinion of the clergy of her realm.¹¹⁶

This strategy (i.e. "to cloak her more explicit acts of power in the language of piety")¹¹⁷ proved to be a spectacularly effective means to elevate Isabel's status in the eyes of her fellow Iberians and, indeed, throughout Europe.

¹¹⁶ Janna Bianchini, *The Queen's Hand: Power and Authority in the Reign of Berenguela of Castile* (Philadelphia: 2012), 107.

¹¹⁷ Bianchini, *The Queen's Hand*, 146.

Isabel's religiosity was not mere showmanship, however;¹¹⁸ instead, it was a deeply held set of convictions that helped to shape her particular ruling style. In fact, her personal piety not infrequently proved to be her "saving grace" in more ways than one. Isabel became most profoundly human to her subjects, argues Núria Silleras-Fernández, in the process of mourning the loss of three of her close family members who all died within the same decade, which also proved to be the last one of her own life. In "Isabel's Years of Sorrow: Consoling the Catholic Queen," this scholar employs new theories of emotion studies to ask key questions pertinent for the study of queenship more generally. As queenship scholars have noted, women were the ones primarily tasked with the emotional labor of mourning the dead.¹¹⁹ That Isabel had to do so while still maintaining a firm grip on the helm of her rule shows us much about how emotion rules operated within the flexible parameters of queenship as an office. It also demonstrates the limits of that flexibility in the cultural restraints placed on the expression of royal emotion.

Emotion rules are perhaps most effectively crystallized and conveyed within a culture from one generation to the next via such vehicles as literature and art. Such is the focus of the next essay in this collection, Edward Friedman's "Staging the Queen." This chapter marks a shift in the focus of the volume in that it is the first of several to explore Queen Isabel's legacy after her death. This approach assumes that queenship as an institution is powerful enough to extend past the end of any individual queen's life. By the time the Spanish Golden Age playwright Lope de Vega was writing, Queen Isabel herself was long gone (although still a relatively fresh memory in the minds of at least older Castilians). But arguably, the effectiveness of her queenship had expanded the parameters of the office of "queen" in Spain for all its subsequent holders.¹²⁰

118 As Theresa Earenfight clarifies regarding queens more generally, "royal women collaborated with their hagiographers [...]. This does not mean that the piety of royal women was a fabrication. For them, acts of piety and charity were logical and self-conscious forms of royal work that offset the militant side of kingship [...]. Sanctity was [...] a powerful platform from which a queen could act forcefully and publicly to stabilize the realm, protect the king's reputation, act as a counterbalance to a warrior king and use her saintly reputation to promote the interests of the church" (Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe*, 36–37).

119 Bianchini alludes to this commonplace when she reports that Berenguela had to step into "the traditionally female role of chief mourner and caretaker of the dead" (Bianchini, *The Queen's Hand*, 98).

120 Theresa Earenfight describes this process thus: "One becomes a queen by living as a queen, changing the category as one incorporates and inspires it. Queenship is discursive and discourse is generative. It is an incessant project, a daily act of reconstruction and interpretation" (Earenfight, "Without the *Persona*," 14). This same scholar comments

Indeed, she is routinely credited with nothing less than the impressive feat of nation-building. In “The Legend of Isabel *la Católica*, Founder of Spain,” Caroline Travalia interrogates this piece of received wisdom in order to begin to disentangle how much is attributable to Isabel and her queenship and how much is instead the ugly legacy of Fascism. In a sense, perhaps, her queenship might arguably have been more effective if she were responsible for suturing Spain’s disparate kingdoms together into a seamless, unified whole. But the reality is in fact far more complicated. This chapter demonstrates the limits of queenship and thus contributes to our emerging picture of the contours of what precisely it meant to be a queen.

If Fascism is the culprit in Travalia’s account, popular media takes on that mantle in the volume’s closing chapter by Emily Francomano (along with right-wing political movements in Spain that are striving to resurrect the ghost of Franco). In “Isabel *la Católica* for the 21st Century: Popular and Political Recreations,” Francomano puts some of the tarnish back onto Isabel’s carefully polished image by exploring recent not-so-favorable depictions of her in Spanish films, television series, and newspaper accounts. However, in the end the fact that her model of queenship has proven capacious enough to hold all of these conflicting interpretations simultaneously is a testament to its durability. Whatever outrageous things might be said about Isabel, she was all of those things – and more.

We are still inventing Isabel. She would probably like it that way. Her enigmatic visage stares back at us from that sepia-tinged old photograph with a smile as mysterious as the Mona Lisa’s. Her virtue is unknowable, but her queenship is not. It is my hope that this volume will make a significant contribution to queenship studies, just like her reign did to the office of queenship.

regarding the specific case of Isabel: “Isabel, as a proprietary queen, reconfigured the institution of monarchy by intertwining kingship and queenship ideologies into a single institution” (Earenfight, “Preface,” xxv).

Isabel, Her Chroniclers, and the Inquisition: Self-Fashioning and Historical Memory

David A. Boruchoff

Those realms are still governed by her name and by the ways that she ordained; for which, even though her life has lapsed, her authority lives on, much as a wheel long turned by force continues to spin on its own for a good space of time.

BALDASSARE CASTIGLIONE, *Il libro del cortegiano* (The Book of the Courtier, 1528)



It was by no means an easy task to defend the innovations of the Spanish (or modern) Inquisition before the pope and his Curia in Rome. After this new Inquisition was authorized by Pope Sixtus IV in the bull *Exigit sinceræ devotionis* (1 November 1478), Isabel and Fernando appointed two Dominicans – Miguel de Morillo and Juan de San Martín – on 27 September 1480 “to investigate and proceed against [...] infidels and bad Christians and heretics, and against any persons that you may find to be infected and stained by the afore-said crimes of infidelity and heresy and apostasy in all of these, our realms and domains.”¹ This commission was announced by Morillo and San Martín on 2 January 1481 in a proclamation repeating the text of Isabel and Fernando’s letter and Sixtus IV’s bull.² Morillo and San Martín were established by that time in Seville, where, following the precedents of the medieval (or episcopal) Inquisition, they published an edict of grace that gave citizens one month to

¹ “inquirir e proceder contra los [...] infieles e malos christianos e herejes, e contra cualesquier personas que falláredes estar infisionadas e maculadas de los dichos crímenes de infidelidad e herejía e apostasía en todos estos nuestros Reynos e señoríos” (*Bulario Pontificio de la Inquisición Española en su período constitucional [1478–1525]*, ed. Bernardino Llorca [Rome: 1949], 55). All translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.

² This composite document appears in *Bulario Pontificio*, 48–59.

denounce themselves or others suspected of lapses in orthodoxy or of crimes against the faith. This opportunity for reconciliation was attended by the threat of punishment for anyone who might flee the city or harbor such fugitives.³ Formal tribunals followed in early 1481, inaugurating a series of administrative procedures and guidelines subsequently refined and extended to other parts of Castile.

Whereas Sixtus IV directed his bull to Fernando and Isabel as “illustrious king and queen of Castile and León” and authorized them “to drive faithlessness not only from these same kingdoms, but also from the kingdom of Granada and places adjacent to it where infidels dwell,”⁴ the letter of appointment sent to Morillo and San Martín began with a far more extensive list of territories subject to the monarchs and seemingly intended to become venues for the new Inquisition.⁵ These lands included Sicily, the Balearic Islands, Valencia, and the more amorphous Crown of Aragon,⁶ where Fernando was not yet king and in which, unlike Castile, inquisitorial proceedings against heretics had roots dating back to the thirteenth century.⁷ In support of this larger sphere of projected action, the monarchs insisted that “there were and are some bad Christians, [...] apostates and heretics [...] in many and diverse parts, cities, towns and villages of these, our realms and domains.” They accordingly empowered Morillo and San Martín to act as Inquisitors not only in the kingdoms authorized by Sixtus IV, but, more broadly, “in all of these, our realms and domains, in any cities, towns and villages, and in any part of them.”⁸

3 *Bulario Pontificio*, 56–59.

4 “Regi et [...] Regine Castelle et legionis Illustribus”; “non solum de Regnis ipsis [...] perfidiam eiicere, sed etiam Granate Regnum et illi adiacentia loca, que infideles incolunt” (*Bulario Pontificio*, 51–52).

5 “Rey y Reina de Castilla, de Aragón, de Sicilia, de Toledo, de Valencia, de Galicia, de Mallorca, de Sevilla, de Cerdeña, de Córdoba, de Córzega, de Murcia, de Jaén, de los Algarbes, de Algecira, de Gibraltar, Conde e Condesa de Barcelona, Señores de Vizcaya e de Molina, Duques de Atenas e de Neopatria, Condes de Ruisellón y de Cerdeña, Marqueses de Oristán e de Gosiano” (*Bulario Pontificio*, 49).

6 On the territorial imprecision of the terms *Aragón*, *Corona de Aragón* (Crown of Aragon) and *Corona del reino de Aragón* (Crown of the Kingdom of Aragon) see Juan Manuel del Estal, “Antigüedad del concepto y denominación ‘Corona de Aragón,’” *Medievalia* 10 (1992): 133–68, and Jesús Lalinde Abadía, “El significado de Corona de Aragón (contraréplica),” *Medievalia* 11 (1994): 33–40.

7 Fernando did not ascend to the throne of Aragon until the death of his father, John II, on 20 January 1479. For the papal bulls from 1232 and 1249 that set out the purpose and parameters of the Inquisition entrusted to the Dominican Order in medieval Aragon, see *Bulario Pontificio*, 22–23 and 41–47.

8 “en muchas e diversas partes, ciudades, villas e lugares de estos nuestros Reinos e señoríos, avía e ay algunos malos christianos, [...] apóstatas e hereges”; “en todos estos nuestros

Although the Spanish Inquisition was at first confined to Castile, the lands and personnel subject to its jurisdiction were frequent points of contention in the monarchs' negotiations with the Holy See. By replacing a judicial system grounded in dioceses, and in the case of Aragon explicitly subject to the authority of the pope or the prior of the Dominican order as his delegate,⁹ with a bureaucracy prone to manipulation by the state in consideration of its interests, the Spanish Inquisition would become a vital instrument of royal control – “the only tribunal with equal and homogeneous jurisdiction in all of the realms of Fernando and Isabel.”¹⁰ Indeed, it was the only court of law with “the right to pursue everyone, without distinction of privileges.”¹¹ The instructions sent in 1484 to the monarchs' solicitors in Rome were adamant in this regard, in that they were to obtain a bull from the pope authorizing Inquisitors named by the crown “to fine, to correct and to punish by spiritual and worldly means all and any persons – whether ecclesiastical, religious or lay – even if they are privileged or exempted by our lord the pope or his officials.”¹² By directing the administration of Inquisitorial justice through appointments and

Reynos e señoríos, en cualesquier ciudades, villas e lugares, e en cualquier parte de ellos” (*Bulario Pontificio*, 49, 55).

- 9 Innocent IV, *Inter alia desiderabilia* (20 October 1249), in *Bulario Pontificio*, 46, specified that Inquisitors were to be named “auctoritate nostra” (by our authority) in those parts of the province of Narbonne subject to James I of Aragon. Urban IV addressed his instructions to “Fratribus Ordinis Praedicatorum, Inquisitoribus hereticae prauitatis, in regno et dominio [...] regis Aragonum deputatis auctoritate apostolica” (brothers of the Order of Preachers deputized by apostolic authority as Inquisitors of heretical wickedness in the kingdom and domain [...] of the King of Aragon) (Urban IV, *Prae cunctis nostrae mentis* [28 July 1262], in Gonzalo Martínez Díez [ed.], *Bulario de la Inquisición Española [Hasta la muerte de Fernando el Católico]* [Madrid: 1997], doc. 10, p. 36.) These and all other thirteenth-century bulls governing inquisitorial activity in Aragon were addressed to Dominican friars of this kingdom in general. Nevertheless, in response to a doubt raised by these friars, Urban IV affirmed in *Consultis felicitis recordationis* (12 August 1262) that the prior of the Dominicans in Paris could also “inquirere tam per se quam per alios, quos ad hoc idoneos reputaret in quo” (conduct an inquiry by himself or by means of others whom he might reckon to be competent in this matter) (Martínez Díez [ed.], *Bulario*, doc. 15, p. 62).
- 10 “el único tribunal con jurisdicción igual y homogénea en todos los reinos de Fernando e Isabel” (Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada, *Los Reyes Católicos: La corona y la unidad de España* [Valencia: 1989], 219).
- 11 “le seul tribunal qui ait le droit de poursuivre tout le monde, sans distinction de privilèges” (Joseph Pérez, *Isabelle et Ferdinand: Rois Catholiques d'Espagne* [Paris: 1988]), 350).
- 12 “multar, corregir e castigar, espiritual e temporalmente, a todas e qualesquier personas, eclesiasticas, religiosas e seglares, avnque sehan preuillejadas o exemptas por nuestro señor el Papa o sus ofiçiales” (“Memorial de las cosas a solicitar en Roma sobre la Inquisición” [12 October 1484], in Antonio de la Torre [ed.], *Documentos sobre relaciones internacionales*, 6 vols [Barcelona: 1949–66], 2:120).

other means, the crown would obtain leverage over the clergy and nobility in a way unimaginable in earlier times.

Jurisdiction was also at the core of other reforms that intended to increase royal authority while diminishing that of the nobility. Examples include sending trusted *adelantados* (governors) to frontier provinces and expanding the use of *corregidores* (overseers) in more well-established territories.¹³ Equally instrumental was the reformation of the Hermandad, a constabulary funded by annual levies that would operate throughout Castile and help to pacify neighboring areas such as Granada. Presented at the Cortes of Madrigal (1476), this force – which some authors called *Santa Hermandad* (the Holy Brotherhood) to enhance its authority and to distinguish it from local posses¹⁴ – was welcomed by delegates from cities seeking relief from the lawlessness then rampant.¹⁵ It was nevertheless opposed by the nobility, who saw it as a threat to their privileges (above all, their exemption from taxation).¹⁶ To overcome such resistance, Isabel and Fernando would employ a strategy used in other polemical initiatives, namely, framing their pursuit of security and justice as a moral imperative “in fulfillment of God’s service and ours, and the benefit and common good of our [...] realms.”¹⁷ Their address to the Cortes of Madrigal began

13 The crown’s right to impose *corregidores* was discussed at the Cortes of Madrigal (1476) and guidelines for their conduct and administration were established at the Cortes of Toledo (1480). See *Cortes de los antiguos reinos de León y de Castilla*, 4 vols (Madrid: 1861–82), 4:97 and 4:136–83.

14 It is in the context of both these considerations that Alonso de Palencia (1423–92) first uses the adjective *Santa* to describe the Hermandad in his *Crónica de Enrique IV*, trans. A. Paz y Meliá, 4 vols (Madrid: 1904–08), lib. 28, c. 2, 4:318–19.

15 These cities were Burgos, Palencia, Medina del Campo, Olmedo, Ávila, Segovia, Salamanca, and Zamora.

16 Fernando del Pulgar, *Crónica de los Reyes Católicos*, ed. Juan de Mata Carriazo, 2 vols (Madrid: 1943), c. 70, 1:242–43, explains that the crown’s original intent was to have all sectors of Castilian society contribute financially to maintain the Hermandad: “considerando que la utilidad era común a todos, caualleros & escuderos e hidalgos, fué ordenado que todos contribuyesen en ella, también los esentos como los no esentos.” When the nobles protested that this was “en quebrantamiento de la libertad que tienen por razón de su hidalguía,” they received an exemption. This lasted as long as the Hermandad was in existence. Churches and monasteries were likewise exempted from “gastos & cõtribuciones.” See *Este es el quaderno de las leyes nuevas dela hermãdad del Rey & dela Reyna n[uest]ros señores & por su mãdado fechas en la jũta general e Tor d[e] lagũa. notificadas el año [...] de mill & q[ua]trociẽtos y ochenta y seys años* (Seville: ca. 1511), fol. 71.

17 “conplidero a seruicio de Dios e nuestro e pro e bien comun delos [...] nuestros rreynos” (*Cortes*, 4:2). After the cities presented their petition, the monarchs again declared: “veyendo que esto era cossa muy conplidera al seruicio de Dios e nuestro e al bien e pro comun de nuestros rreynos, [...] plogonos que se hiçiese asy” (*Cortes*, 4:4). Pulgar twice attributes similar conceits to the petitioners’ spokesman, Alfonso de Quintanilla: “que estas

by asserting that kings were put on earth as God's vicars, for which they are obliged to do his holy bidding:

Knowing that principally the administration and execution of justice is commended to us by God in these realms, [...] we resolved, when we began to reign, to offer the first fruits of our justice to him, asking [ourselves] how very necessary the reformation [of justice] is in our realms, so as to watch over them in such a way that we can make a good account to God of this charge, which is entrusted to us so that we might use it well and merit it.¹⁸

Claims to holy intentions, God's trust and service to the faith – and only secondarily to the nation – were likewise a mainstay of the rhetoric used conjointly by the queen and king, if not more persistently by Isabel alone, in negotiations with the Holy See. To understand the reasons for this strategy, we might begin with its employ in similarly contentious domestic affairs where local and national interests bore equal importance (as in the debate on the *Hermandad*). Fernando del Pulgar (ca. 1430-ca. 1492) relates that the “hateful violence” of the first inquisitors and their agents drove more than three thousand *converso* households to seek refuge abroad, depopulating a large swath of Seville and its archdiocese.¹⁹ The ensuing disruption of commerce deeply troubled local authorities, yet did not deter Isabel from what she declared to be her Christian and royal duty:

Hermandades en sus reynos se ynstituyan e establezcan, [...] considerando el gran serui-
cio de Dios e suyo, e la paz e sosiego que dellas en su reyno se puede seguir” and “consid-
erando cuánto era seruicio de Dios e del Rey e de la Reyna, e bien e seguridad general del
reyno” (Pulgar, *Crónica*, c. 70, 1:238 and 1:241).

- 18 “Conosçiendo que prinçipalmente esta administraçion e execuçion dela iustiçia nos es encomendada por Dios en estos rreynos, [...] deliberamos en el comienço de nuestro reynar ofresçerle las primiçias de nuestros fructos de la justiçia, inquiriendo sobre que cosa es mas neçessaria la rreformaçion en nuestros rreynos para proueer sobrellas [*sic*] de manera que pudiessemos dar a Dios buena cuenta deste cargo que nos es encomendado para que aprovechasemos e meresçiesemos en el” (*Cortes*, 4:2).
- 19 “Falláronse en Seuilla y en su arçobispado en aquella saçón tres mill casas & más do moraua aquella gente, los quales se avsentaron con sus mugeres & hijos. Dellos se fueron por mar e por la tierra a otros lugares estraños [...]. [L]a avsençia desta gente despobló gran parte de la çibdad” (Pulgar, *Crónica*, c. 120, 1:440). The number of departures is higher in c. 96, 1:337: “quatro mil casas e más, do moraba muchos de los de aquel linage [...] se absentaron de la tierra con sus mugeres e hijos.”

The queen was notified that the great trade that existed in the city was diminishing, and that her rents were for this reason decreasing by a large amount; however, she gave little value to the diminution of her rents and said that she wished to cleanse her realm of that sin of heresy, putting aside all interest; for she understood that this was in God's service and her own. And the supplications and admonishments made to her in this incident did not make her retreat from this objective.²⁰

The royal chronicler Alfonso de Palencia (1423–1492) gives a similar account of the monarchs' priorities in founding the Inquisition:

The most necessary, Catholic remedy for punishing heretical wickedness, the Inquisition, also increased the penury [of the kingdom]. This was esteemed to be of no importance in respect to eternal happiness, just as the riches that ought to be possessed are truly [gotten] through Catholic truth. Therefore, the most Christian princes, the fortunate King Fernando and his wife, Queen Isabel, esteemed this sort of inconvenience as secondary to removing from the city of Seville the multitude that was Judaizing, so the men stained [by apostasy] might return to the true path of salvation via reconciliation or be burned as hardened [sinners].²¹

Not surprisingly, Fernando summoned the same conceits when authorities in Barcelona and Valencia tried to forestall the implantation of the new

20 "fué notificado a la Reyna que el gran trato que en ella avía se deminuya, e sus rentas por esta causa se abaxauan en gran cantitat, pero ella estimava en muy poco la diminuyçión de sus rentas, & decía que todo ynterese pospuesto quería alinpiar su reyno de aquel pecado de eregia, porque entendía que aquello era seruicio de Dios & suyo. E las suplicaçiones & amonestaçiones que le fueron fechas en este caso no la retruxeron deste propósito" (Pulgar, *Crónica*, c. 120, 1:440). It would appear that Pulgar added this chapter 120 with the intent to delete chapter 96, the only one found in other editions, so as to stress that the rigor used in Seville departed from the mercy of ecclesiastical justice, that is, "la piedad de Dios & lo que la Santa Madre Iglesia manda vsar en este caso, con dulçes raçones & blandas amonestaçiones, e con buenas doctrinas & enxemplos se devían traer a la Fé aquellos errados" (Pulgar, *Crónica*, c. 120, 1:439–40).

21 "Nec nõ catholicã inquisitionis remediũ ad puniendã prauitatẽ hereticã sũme necessariũ inopiã auxerat. Quod respectu foelicitatis æternę parui faciẽdum cẽsetur. Q[uo]m[odo] illę verę sunt opes quęcũ veritate catholica possidentur. xpianissimi ig[itu]r principes rex foelicet [sic] fernãdus atq[ue] uxor helisabeth regina /qualẽ inq[uam] incõmoditatẽ post habẽdã censuerunt: ut ex popula vrbus Beticis multitudo Judaizãtiũ auferretur. ita vt recõciliatione vera in viã salutis redirent hõmi[n]es maculati: vel indurati comburerẽtur" (Alfonso de Palencia, *Narratio belli aduersus Granatenses* or *Bellum aduersus Granatenses*, Biblioteca Nacional de España, Ms. 1627, lib. 4, fol. 41r).

(Spanish) Inquisition in their cities by noting the likelihood of financial ruin. In the wake of reports about the flight of *conversos* from Valencia after the new Inquisition began to operate there in 1482,²² the councilors of Barcelona wrote to Fernando on 9 July 1484 to demand that he “put a stop to this novelty” due to “the great harm that is expected to follow to this city and its republic, and due to the injuries [that will be] done to the privileges of the city and to the constitutions, liberties, [and] capitulations recorded in the Cortes and laws of the land, if the said Inquisitors exercise their office.” Indeed, “many [*conversos*] have already emptied out of the city and have taken their goods to go settle in other parts.”²³ The terse reply sent by Fernando via his lieutenant, Enric of Aragon, avows the holiness of his purpose in ordering the new tribunals, without addressing any of the constitutional issues raised by the councilors. This deflection is understandable, given Fernando’s ongoing efforts both to pacify and to exert his authority over Barcelona and Cataluña more broadly:²⁴

22 Barcelona’s emissary to the royal court, Joan Bernat de Marimon, advised the councilors on 18 March 1482 that numerous *conversos* had left Valencia due to fear of the new Inquisition, so they should not doubt that in Barcelona there will similarly occur “gran diminucio de populacio e desuiament de mercaderia” (a great decrease in population and redirection of merchandise) (Francesch Carreras i Candi, “Evolució històrica dels jueus y juheissants barcelonins,” *Estudis Universitaris Catalans* 3 [1909]: 404–28 and 498–522, at 508). The new Inquisition began its activity in Valencia with an edict of grace in December 1481 under Juan Cristóbal de Gualbes and Juan Orts, who had been appointed by Fernando without papal authorization. This ignited a tug of war over appointments between Fernando and Pope Sixtus IV, replete with charges of irregularity, cruelty and predation against Orts and especially Gualbes, who was suspended, reinstated and finally replaced “for his defects” (see the documents in *Bulario Pontificio*, 67–78, 87–90 and 104–06). For an overview of this struggle, which surpasses the scope of my study concerning the mode of argumentation used by the Spanish Monarchs, see Ricardo García Cárcel, *Orígenes de la Inquisición Española: El tribunal de Valencia 1478–1530*, 2nd ed. (Barcelona: 1985), 47–56, and José Antonio Escudero, “Fernando el Católico y la introducción de la Inquisición,” *Revista de la Inquisición: Intolerancia y Derechos Humanos* 19 (2015): 19–23.

23 “per los grans dans que an aquesta Ciutat e a la cosa publica de aquella se sperauen seguir e per los preiudicis fets als priuilegis de aquesta Ciutat, e a les Constitucions, libertats, Capitols de Cort e leys de la terra si dits Inquisidors exercien lur offici, fos plasent a la sua Sa voler fer cessar dites nouitats: E que ja molts buydauen la Ciutat e sen portauen lurs bens per anar se poblar en altres parts” (cited in Francesch Carreras i Candi, “L’inquisició barcelonina, substituïda per l’inquisició castellana [1446–1487],” *Anuari de l’Institut d’Estudis Catalans* 3 [1909–10]: doc. 5, p. 151).

24 The context of this struggle is described concisely by Jaume Vicens Vives in *Historia crítica de la vida y reinado de Fernando 11 de Aragón* [1962], ed. Miquel A. Marín Gelabert (Zaragoza: 2006), 510–23.

Before we decided to give leave to set up this Inquisition in any city of our realms, we at length considered and saw the damages and repercussions that could follow from this and that might result to our royal rights and revenues. But because our firm intention and zeal is to set the service of our lord God before our own, knowing how much it is a holy thing for this Inquisition to proceed, [...] we wish that this be done in any event, setting aside all other interests.²⁵

Similar is the letter sent by Fernando to Valencia in the care of Juan Fernández de Heredia on 31 July 1484 with the instruction “have it read in public.” This states in part: “Not for the interest or utility that could follow to us in the short term, nor for any other personal or particular interest, shall we put off the honor and service of our lord God, and the exaltation of the holy Catholic faith, which must instead come before every other interest, however great it may be.”²⁶

This refusal to engage substantive arguments about longstanding rights and exemptions raised by the Cortes and local councils of Aragon and Castile, the Roman Curia and the nobility, etc. – and instead to insist on the sanctity of the reforms intended – was, again, a cornerstone of the tactic used by both

25 “Antes que nos hoviessemos deliberado en dar lugar en que esta inquisicion se fiziesse en ciudad alguna de nuestros reynos hovimos bien considerado y visto todos los danyos e incrementos que desto se podia seguir y que a nuestros derechos y rentas reales ne provendria. Pero porque nuestra firme intencion y zelo es anteponer el servicio de nuestro Señor Dios al nuestro, conociendo quanto es sancta cosa proseguir esta inquisicion, [...] queremos aquella en todo caso se faga, todos otros intereses postposados” (quoted in Francesc Xavier Riera Hernández, “Ferran II i la Generalitat de Catalunya [1474–1494]” [PhD diss., Universitat de Barcelona, 2015], 277–78). Similar in tenor is a letter of 10 August 1487, sent by Fernando to the councilors of Barcelona, in regard to the “alteraciones o diferencias” that arose while swearing in Inquisitors: “considerat emperó que en aquest offici de la sancta inquisició se tracta tant de servey de nostre Senyor deu e del exalçament de la sua sancta fe catholica, es molt rahonable cosa sia preferit a tot altre respecte, maiorment que lo dit prejuhi, en cas que sia, no es tal que no sia molt major lo merit ques segueix de extirpar crim tant detestable” (however, considering that in this office of the holy inquisition the aim is so much the service of our lord God and the exaltation of his holy Catholic faith, it is a very reasonable thing that it be preferred to every other consideration, above all since the said damage, should it exist, is not such that the merit to follow from extirpating such a detestable crime would not be much greater) (quoted in Carreras i Candi, “L’inquisició barcelonina,” doc. 20, p. 176).

26 “no negam que per lo interes o utilitat que de la cort se nos poria seguir ne per degun altre propi o particular interes haia apostposar la honra e servey de nostre senyor Deu e exaltació de Sancta Fe Catholica, ans aquell ha de procehir a tot altre interes per gran que sia” (quoted in García Cárcel, *Orígenes de la Inquisición Española*, 66).

monarchs, especially Isabel, to impose their will. In order not to deviate from my focus on the crown's success in deploying this efficacious "means of persuasion" or *rhetoric* in the broad sense,²⁷ the following pages do not take up the procedures, functionaries, structures and impacts of the Inquisition, or of any other of the institutions that the monarchs sought to bring under their control, except insofar as these bear on royal persuasion and the role that self-fashioning played within it.

In light of Castile's depleted treasury when Isabel ascended the throne and the expense of war, first with her niece Juana's partisans, then with Portugal and finally with Granada,²⁸ there is ample reason to question the queen's repeated protestations of financial disinterest and of always setting God's service above her own. Opponents of the newly instituted Inquisition were quick to observe that the confiscation of property not only from convicted heretics, but from others whose cases were still pending, particularly *conversos* accused or suspected of apostasy,²⁹ benefited the crown perhaps more than it did the faith. Indeed, even some apologists for the Inquisition cite the large sums seized from condemned apostates, albeit to denounce the ill-gotten riches of Jews and their *converso* descendants. A *memorial* (ca. 1524) addressed to Charles I (Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire) asserts that "these realms were reformed" due to the Inquisition, "bringing many persons to the faith; and the Catholic monarchs profited by more than ten million ducats, which was of great aid to the war with the Moors."³⁰ Although the damage done to Spain's

27 Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, bk 1, § 2 (1355b), trans. W. Rhys Roberts, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, 2 vols (Princeton: 1995), 2:2155.

28 Palencia's statements about the Inquisition are indeed framed within a discussion about how war against Granada had left Castile on the verge of bankruptcy. This plight was shared by the city of Toledo, which therefore undertook to convince Isabel to postpone Inquisitorial proceedings there.

29 Because of complaints that the confiscation of property from persons not proven guilty of crimes against the faith violated canon law, Tomás de Torquemada's *Instrucciones* of 1485 addressed how, pending the outcome of the trial, goods were to be sequestered and held by a receiver (*receptor*), how they were to be inventoried and how they were to be distributed in the event of a conviction. See "Instrucciones que tocan al receptor," in Gaspar Isidro de Argüello, *Instrucciones del Santo Oficio de la Inquisicion, sumariamente, antiguas, y nuevas* (Madrid: 1627), fols CIV-4v.

30 "estos rreynos fuerõ rreformados trayẽdo muchas presonas ala fee y los rreyes chatolicos se ap[ro]uecharõ en mas de dies myllones d[e] ducados q[ue] fue mucha ayuda p[ar]a la guerra d[e] los moros" ("Memorial del Licenciado Tristán de León sobre los judíos falsamente convertidos," Archivo General de Simancas, Patronato Real, Inquisición, leg. 28, doc. 31, fol. 101r). The date of 1524 is given by Henry Charles Lea, *A History of the Inquisition of Spain*, 4 vols (New York: 1906–07), 2:367.

economy by prosecuting *conversos* likely outweighed the short-term proceeds from penalties and seizures, the latter were undoubtedly more notorious.

Both in oblique complaints, like those that Pulgar transposed from his own letters into the mouths of historical figures in his *Crónica de los Reyes Católicos*,³¹ and in direct indictments, as in Diego Ortiz de Zúñiga's statement that the judge of the exchequer aided the crown by levying "hefty penalties, and the multitude of cases against persons of means was notable,"³² the specter of predation hung over the Inquisition from the start. Indeed, Morillo and San Martín's notice of appointment also ordered that all people who had absconded to seignorial lands were to be returned to the Inquisition in Seville "as persons strongly suspected of infidelity," and their possessions were to be seized, sequestered and inventoried "so that an accounting might be given of them whenever this is demanded of you or of them by the said king and queen our lords, or by us in their name."³³ In contemporaneous histories of the

31 Although Pulgar's letters regarding the mistreatment of *conversos* date to the mid- to late 1470s, readers of his *Cartas or Letras* (1485) could not help but associate them – as Pulgar surely intended – with the first round of Inquisitorial trials: "[N]o se puede buenamente sofrir que algunos que iuzgays no ser de linaje tengan honras e oficios de gouernación, porque entendeis que el defecto de la sangre les quita la habilidad del gouernar. Asimismo se sufre grauemente ver riquezas en omnes que se cree no las merecer, en especial aquellos que nueuamente las ganaron [...]. [N]o se deue hauer [por] molesto tener riquezas e honras aquellos que paresce que no las deuen tener, y carescer dellas los que por linaje paresce que las merescen" (You cannot bear that some who you judge not to be of [old-Christian] lineage should have honors and governing offices, because you understand that the defect of [impure] blood deprives them of the ability to govern. And likewise you suffer deeply to see riches in men whom you believe not to merit them, especially in those who have gained them recently [...]. One should not be bothered that those whom it seems should not have riches and honors have them, while others who it seems should have them on the basis of lineage do not) (Fernando del Pulgar, "Para un su amigo de Toledo" [Letra xiv], *Letras. Glosa a las Coplas de Mingo Revulgo*, ed. J. Domínguez Bordona [Madrid: 1929], 69, 72–73). Pulgar recycled both passages into his *Crónica*, c. 98, 1:347–48, where the mayor of Toledo, Gómez Manrique, declaims them as his own to rally support for Isabel in the war with Portugal. The *Crónica's* readers would find the theological arguments voiced by Manrique ill-suited to the political conflicts to which he applies them, and instead pertinent to the religious strife simultaneously found in the city. On Pulgar's use of apocryphal speeches, see David A. Boruchoff, "Historiography with License: Isabel, the Catholic Monarch and the Kingdom of God," in David A. Boruchoff (ed.), *Isabel la Católica, Queen of Castile: Critical Essays* (New York: 2003), 238–55.

32 "vino con estos Inquisidores el primer Iuez del Fisco, que vtilizò presto a los Reyes con gruessas penas, segun fue notable la muchedumbre de causas de personas caudalosas" (Diego Ortiz de Zúñiga, *Annales ecclesiasticos y seculares de la muy noble, y muy leal ciudad de Sevilla* [Madrid: 1677], lib. 12, año 1480, p. 389).

33 "todas las personas, homes e mugeres, que a ellos se ayan e an ido a vivir e estar a ellos, desde un mes a esta parte, e los prendáis los cuerpos, e nos los enviéis presos a buen

Inquisition, demands for retributive justice were in the same way grounded in the allegation that the Jews baptized during preceding decades had feigned conversion to gain access to wealth, honors and royal and municipal offices. It is not by chance that, in a single chapter, Andrés Bernáldez passed from invectives against the “inveterate and fetid synagogue” of Jews to the apostasy of converts – whom he called “secret Jews,” with habits “neither more nor less than those of the selfsame fetid Jews”³⁴ – and finally to the subterfuge in which *conversos* engaged to enrich and empower themselves to the detriment of Old Christians. This leads in his text, without pause, to the closing statement that those investigating this troublesome state of affairs

denounced the case at length to their highnesses, making them know how, by whom and where Judaic ceremonies were performed, and how powerful persons, in very large part from the city of Seville, were accountable; and, together with this, it was certified to their highnesses that this monstrous ailment was present in all their [Kingdom of] Castile; and they got a bull from Pope Sixtus IV to proceed justly against the said heresy by way of fire [i.e., bonfire]. The bull was conceded and the Inquisition ordained in the year 1480.³⁵

recabdo, a su costa e minción aquí a la nuestra cárcel, como a personas muy sospechosas de infidelidad; e otrosí, que les secréstedes e mandades secrestar todos los bienes que les fueren fallados e que ovieren levado consigo, los cuales faced tomar por inventario e ante scrivano público, e los pongáis en secrestación en poder de presonas llanas e abonadas, que los tengan e guarden de manifiesto para que den cuenta de ellos, cada e quando por los dichos Reyes nuestros Señores, e por nosotros en su nombre, a vos o a ellos fueren demandados” (*Bulario Pontificio*, 58).

34 “fueron y eran judíos secretos [...]”. Habeis de saber, que las costumbres [...] ni mas ni menos que era [*sic*] de los propios hediondos judíos” (Andrés Bernáldez, *Historia de los Reyes Católicos D. Fernando y Doña Isabel*, 2 vols [Seville: 1870], c. 43, 1:124–26). In calling *conversos* “judíos secretos,” Bernáldez adopts the labels *publici iudei* (public Jews) and *occulti iudei* (hidden or secret Jews) popularized by Alfonso de Espina, *Fortalitium fidei* (Strasbourg: 1462), lib. 3, c. 12, § 5, n.p. The derogatory adjective *hediondo* (fetid) is meant both literally and figuratively in that Bernáldez claims that the odor given off by *conversos* derives from their diet, which is the same as that of “public Jews.”

35 “denunciaron el caso por estenso á sus Altezas, é faciéndoles saber cómo y quién y dónde se hacian las judaicas ceremonias, y como cabian en personas poderosas y en muy gran parte de la ciudad de Sevilla; y junto con esto fueron certificados que en toda su Castilla habia esta disforme dolencia; y ovieron Bulla del Papa Sixto IV, para proceder con justicia contra la dicha heregía por via del fuego. Concedióse la Bula y ordenóse la Inquisición el año de 1480” (Bernáldez, *Historia*, c. 43, 1:128).

The first set of instructions (1484) issued by Tomás de Torquemada as Inquisitor General would attempt to silence critics who accused the crown of using the Inquisition to generate funds for its own benefit. The seventh article asserts: "because the transgression of heresy and apostasy is so forbidden (as it is), and so that those reconciled [to the Church] know by the penalties given to them how gravely they transgressed and sinned [...], let them give a certain part of their goods as alms" in an amount commensurate with "the quality of the person and of the transgressions confessed, and the duration and gravity of the transgressions." Although the confiscation of property from convicted heretics was a longstanding practice in both canon and civil law, with the understanding that descendants would be given all or part of the seized goods as an inheritance, if they were faithful Christians,³⁶ Torquemada went on to state that all of the revenue generated by confiscations under the Spanish Inquisition would go to a holy purpose:

And they should apply the said monetary penitences as an aid to support the holy war that the most serene king and queen are waging against the Moors of Granada, enemies of our holy Catholic faith, as well as for a holy cause that presently might offer itself. For just as the said heretics and apostates offended our Lord and his holy faith by their transgression, so, too, after they are reincorporated and united in the Church, monetary penances are to be imposed on them as a defense of the holy faith.³⁷

This decree soon resonated in numerous contexts, acting as testimony to the piety of the Spanish Monarchs. One example is the entry on "The Division of Goods" in the *Reportorium perutile de prauitate hereticorum et apostatarum* (Very useful repertory of the wickedness of heretics and apostates, 1494), an alphabetical digest of terms commonly used by the Inquisition. It states that

36 Alfonso X of Castile, *Siete Partidas* (c. 1265) (Seville: 1491), part. 7, tit. 26, ley 2–3, fol. KK6v.

37 "por ser el delito de la heregia y apostasia muy defendido (como lo es) y porque los reconciliados conozcan por las penas que les dan, quan grauemente delinquieron, y pecaron [...], que den en limosna cierta parte de sus bienes, [...] atenta la qualidad de la persona, y de los delitos confessados, y la diuturnidad y grauedad dellos: E que deue aplicar las dichas penitencias pecuniarias para ayuda al socorro en la guerra santa q[ue] los Serenissimos Rey y Reyna hazen contra los Moros de Granada, enemigos de nuestra santa Fè Catolica, assi como para causa pia q[ue] de presente se puede ofrecer: porque assi como los dichos hereges y apostatas, por su delito ofendierõ a nuestro Señor, y a su santa Fè, assi despues que reincorporados y vnidos a la Iglesia se les pongan penitencias pecuniarias, para defensa de la santa Fè" (Torquemada, "Instrucciones de 1484," in Argüello, *Instrucciones del Santo Oficio*, fols A4r-v).

in olden times the assets taken from heretics were divided equally among the community where these heretics were condemned, the authorities who executed the sentences imposed on them and the Inquisitors themselves to fund their office. (This practice from “olden times” was in fact still in force in 1484, when Alonso Díaz de Montalvo published his *Ordenanzas reales*.)³⁸ Although seized assets were still to be divided into three parts, “in the present, however, all such goods are applied to the exchequer of their most Christian and serene majesties,” principally to sustain the Inquisition and its officials; likewise, “to wage just war against Saracens, until today in the kingdom of Granada, as experience teaches; and third, to spend on pious causes.” More exceptional and exemplary, the *Reportorium* insists, the king and queen “take none of these goods for themselves, [...] a practice to be praised, for many boons derive from it, as we see from experience.”³⁹

Notwithstanding this campaign to absolve Isabel and Fernando of cupidity, complaints to the Holy See often cited not only the assets seized from persons convicted of offenses against the Christian faith, but also the payments received from other “sufficiently honorable and in no small measure esteemed men,” who were allowed to “reconcile” themselves to the Church by making a

38 The guidelines established in the *Siete partidas* (see note 36 above) were modified in the *Ordenanzas reales de Castilla* during Isabel's reign to ensure that the state received at least half of the property seized. See Alonso Díaz de Montalvo, *Copilació [...] de todas las leyes & pragmaticas fechas & ordenadas por los rreyes de gloriosa memoria ante pasados & por sus altezas en cortes generales* (Huate: 1484), lib. 8, tit. 4, ley 4, fol. Y.3r: “Despues que por el juez eclesiastico alguno fuere cõdenado por ereje la meytad de sus bienes sea para la n[uest]ra camara” (After someone has been condemned as a heretic by the ecclesiastical judge, half of his goods are to go to our exchequer). This order is expanded in lib. 8, tit. 5, ley 1, fol. Y.3r: “[L]a mitad de sus bienes sean confiscados para la nuestra camara. E las dichas penas sean partidas en tres partes. La tercera parte para la nuestra camara & la otra terc[er]a parte para el merino o juez quela executare & la otra terc[er]a parte para el prelado q[ue] la dicha excomunion pusiere” (Half of his goods are to be confiscated for our exchequer; and the said penalties divided into three parts. One third for our exchequer and another third for the local authority or judge who executed the [excommunication] and the final third for the prelate who imposed the said excommunication).

39 “tamē hodie cū talia bōa veniāt applicāda fisco isti [christ]ianissimi & serēssimi reges[.] talia bona diuidunt in tres partes [...] p[ri]mā & p[ri]ncipalē partē expēdi in sustentatione officinij inq[ui]sitiōis dādo salaria inq[ui]sitorib[us] & officialib[us] ipsius officij & faciēdo eis alias mercedes. Itē f[a]c[ien]do cū talib[us] bonis faciūt seu bella iusta [con]tra sarracenos vt ex experientia docet vsq[ue] hodie de regno granatēsi. tertio & in pijs causis dispēdūt & nulla eor[um] bona imbursant [...] & talis [con]suetudo est laudāda cū multa bona exinde p[er]ueniūt. sicut p[er] experiētā videm[us]” (*Reportorium perutile de prauitate hereticorum et apostatarum* [Valencia: 1494], s.v. “Diuisio bonorō hereticorum” [Division of the goods of heretics], fols 103r-v).

"hidden and secret abjuration of their heretical wickedness," and thereby avoid a formal trial and infamy.⁴⁰ This practice, first authorized by Pope Innocent VIII in a bull dated 15 July 1485, came to be lucrative both for the crown and for the Holy See, to which a number of eminent *conversos* appealed to escape prosecution in Spain. As with expanding the Inquisition's purview to Aragon and the reformation of the Hermandad and other instruments of direct rule, secret reconciliations fed into a larger jurisdictional struggle between Spain and Rome, prompting Innocent VIII to concede on 11 February 1486 that Inquisitors "can admit [heretics] to secret reconciliation, however, only in the presence of the king and queen."⁴¹ A series of similar bulls quickly followed, allowing the Spanish Inquisition to grant secret reconciliation to a limited number of people, usually 50, but always with the proviso that these reconciliations be done either in the presence of the monarchs or "by their will and consent, or that of one of them,"⁴² and that persons seeking reconciliation "be nominated by the king and queen, or whichever [one] of them."⁴³ In the latter instance, the benefits of reconciliation were expanded in a way that went to the core of the complaints regarding profiteering made by Bernáldez and others against *conversos*. For Inquisitors were instructed to absolve those reconciled in secret of "every stain or mark of unfitness and infamy coming from what went before, so that they and those of their children who observe the Christian faith can freely retain the benefits and offices, both ecclesiastical and secular, already gotten by them, and can freely and legally receive and likewise retain any others, no matter the number or sort, that may be conferred and conceded to them in the future."⁴⁴

One of the Inquisition's last secretaries, Juan Antonio Llorente, saw this series of bulls as evidence of papal rather than royal greed, presumably

40 "viri honorabiles et non parvae existimationis [...] ad occultam et secretam adiurationem admittere, et ad catholice fidei veritatem et reconciliationem reducere valeatis" (Innocent VIII, *Dilecti fili salutem* [15 July 1485], in *Bulario Pontificio*, 114).

41 "in presentia tamen Regis et Regine [...], ad secretam reconciliationem admittere [...] possitis" (Innocent VIII, *Cum sicut accepimus* [11 February 1486, misdated 1485], in *Bulario Pontificio*, 113).

42 "de eorum vel alterius ipsorum tamen voluntate et consensu admittere" (Innocent VIII, *Dudum siquidem* [31 May 1486], in *Bulario Pontificio*, 130).

43 "Rex et Regina aut quilibet eorum duxerint nominandas" (Innocent VIII, *Cum sicut accepimus* [5 July 1486], in *Bulario Pontificio*, 132).

44 "admittere ac cum eis eorumque filiis christianam fidem observantibus, ut obtenta per eos beneficia ac officia tam ecclesiastica quam secularia retinere libere, ac alia eis in posterum conferenda et concedenda quecumque, quotcumque et qualiacumque fuerint recipere et similiter retinere libere et licite possint, dispensare abolereque omnem inhabilitatis et infamie maculam sive notam ex premissis provenientem" (*Bulario Pontificio*, 132).

because Isabel and Fernando might have derived equal benefit from completed trials.⁴⁵ Llorente held that greed was nevertheless mitigated, in this instance, by Innocent VIII's wish to temper the rigor of justice with mercy, so as to redeem those who had strayed from orthodoxy. Although the pope's stand was rooted in canonical authorities and is in accord with 15th-century preaching,⁴⁶ such compassion would become a key issue in Spain's negotiations with Rome, in which it was construed as a lack of Christian zeal, that is, as evidence of Innocent VIII's acquiescence to the money and pleas of *conversos*. Isabel put this bluntly in a letter of 24 January 1491 written in her own hand: "God's service, the exaltation of our holy Catholic faith and the affection that I have always had and have for your holiness do not let me keep silent about what those who have zeal for God's service and for his holy faith feel of late on seeing that your holiness does not show the same fervor as heretofore in the affairs of the Holy Office of the Inquisition."⁴⁷ Directly and indirectly,

45 Juan Antonio Llorente, *Historia crítica de la Inquisición de España*, 3 vols (Madrid: 1822), c. 7, art. 3, 2:87–109.

46 See, for example, Thomas Aquinas, "De Justitia & Misericordia Dei" (On the justice and mercy of God), *Summa Theologica* [...], *Cum Commentariis Thomæ de Vio Cardinalis Cajetani*, 5 vols (Padua: 1698), I, q. 2, 1:165–68. The power of mercy was a central theme in the preaching of Vicente Ferrer (1350–1419), the most influential figure in the campaign to convert Jews and Muslims to Christianity in the later Middle Ages. A sermon by Ferrer or a follower on Luke 6:36 – "Estote ergo misericordes, sicut et Pater vester misericors est" (Be merciful, therefore, just as your Father is merciful) – averred that being merciful helps others to shed the defects that occasioned the need for mercy in the first place. Its statements about religious justice are directly relevant to Bishop Arias's appeal to Rome. For example: "la misericordia tiene mayor inp[er]io & mas alto dominyo que la iusti[ci]a. & porende d[e]la curia dela iustiç[i]a ay apellacion ala corte d[e]la misericordia asi como a su[per]ior. asi como dela audiencia del ob[is]po comunmente appela[n] p[ar]a delante el s[an]to padre" (Mercy has more command and higher dominion than justice, and thus there is [the possibility of] appeal from the house of justice to the court of mercy, as to a superior, just as from the trial court of a bishop they commonly appeal [cases] to before the Holy Father). The sermon also states near its conclusion: "ase de mitigar la reprehenssion p[o]r tolleracion. en ootra manera latal reprehenssion nõ seria misericordiosa careciendo dela tall modificacion" (reprehension must be mitigated by toleration. Otherwise, lacking such modification, such reprehension would not be merciful) (*Libro que dio maestro Pedro Marín al Conde [de Haro] de los sermones en romance*, Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, Ms. 9433, fols 92r, 99v [fols 21r, 26v of the second foliation]). The affinities of these texts to Ferrer's Latin sermons are studied by Pedro M. Cátedra, "La predicación castellana de san Vicente Ferrer," *Boletín de la Real Academia de Buenas Letras de Barcelona* 39 (1983–84): 235–309.

47 "El seruicio de dios y la exaltaçion de nuestra santa fe catolyca y la affection que a vuestra santidad syenpre toue y tengo no me consyenten callar lo que de poco aca syenten los que tyenen zelo al seruicio de dios y de su santa fe, en uer que uestra santidad no muestra aquel feruor que fasta aquy en las cosas del santo ofyçio de la ynquisyçion" (Isabel I to

Isabel contrasts herself to the pope to avow that justices in her lands are not only better informed than those in his, but moreover immune to bribery, flattery and other inducements used by heretics and their supporters to thwart the Inquisition. Indeed, she says, her ministers are “moved only by the zeal to exalt our Catholic faith, [and] are pained to see it fall.”⁴⁸ As a result, Isabel insists, it is not just mistaken, but in dereliction of God’s service to continue to allow apostates to transfer their cases to Rome.

An earlier complaint took up the same issue of jurisdiction after Innocent VIII refused to return the *converso* bishop, Juan Arias Dávila, to Spain for trial.⁴⁹ Defying a bull (25 September 1487) that directed the Inquisitor General to remit under seal to the Holy See all cases involving bishops or higher officers who “have lapsed into [heresy] or could be impugned or suspected of it,”⁵⁰ Torquemada began proceedings against Arias. Arias had been named bishop of Segovia in 1461 and had in this capacity – according to later accounts of questionable certainty – delivered 16 Jews to civil authorities to be punished for the ritual murder of a Christian boy in the nearby town of Sepúlveda during Holy Week in 1468. Of these 16 Jews, 15 were put to death by fire or hanging, while one youth who repented of his deed and requested baptism was allowed to do penance in a convent.⁵¹ Arias had also barred (or banished) the Inquisition

Innocent VIII [24 January 1491], in Tarsicio de Azcona, “Relaciones de Inocencio VIII con los Reyes Católicos según el fondo Podocataro de Venecia,” *Hispania Sacra* 32 [1980]: 3–28, doc. 4, p. 25).

48 “mouidos por solo zelo del enxalçamyento de nuestra fe catolyca y dolyendose de uerla caer” (Azcona, “Relaciones,” doc. 4, p. 25).

49 Azcona, “Relaciones,” doc. 3, pp. 23–24, discussed below.

50 “prolapsum aut de illo diffamatum fore vel suspectum” (Innocent VIII, *Dilecte fili* [25 September 1487], in *Bulario Pontificio*, 139). Innocent explains that it has been the Church’s policy since the time of Boniface VIII (d. 1303) that such officials should not be prosecuted without a special commission from the pope (“abque speciali Sedis Apostolice commissione”). These tenets in fact date back further to at least 1150. See Gratian, *Decreti secunda pars*, c. 5, q. 4, c. 2, in *Corpus vniversi iuris canonici absolytissimum*, ed Pierre Matthieu, 5 vols (Frankfurt am Main: 1590), 1:287r: “finis vero eius cause ad sedem Apostolicam deferatur, vt ibidem terminetur” (the case [of an accused priest] must in the end be transferred to the Apostolic See to be decided there).

51 Diego de Colmenares, *Historia de la insigne ciudad de Segovia y compendio delas historias de Castilla* (Segovia: 1637), c. 33, § 2, p. 400. The authenticity of Colmenares’s report is unquestioned in the many studies, even today, that cite it as proof either of Arias’s Christian zeal, or of his desire to ensure that Jews and *conversos* be seen as distinct communities. Nevertheless, the events and intentions presented by Colmenares conform to, and are likely influenced by, anti-Jewish calumnies, about which a series of popes, and even the *Siete Partidas*, warn Christians that they are not to give credence. The murder allegedly committed in Sepúlveda was seen in its own time to participate in a pattern of crimes against Christians by Jews. See Lorenzo Calvete, *Historia de la vida del glorioso*

from his diocese in 1483 or 1484,⁵² after it began to prosecute, exhume and burn the corpses of deceased *conversos* accused of adhering in secret to Jewish rites, confiscating the inheritance that had already passed to their descendants.⁵³ If impeding the Inquisition did not land Arias in Torquemada's sights – for indeed, two bulls dated 25 May 1483 explicitly prohibited bishops of Jewish descent from interfering with its tribunals⁵⁴ – the crown's desire to strengthen

S. Fructos patron de la ciudad de Segovia, y de sus hermanos san Valentin y santa Engracia (Valladolid: 1610), lib. 3, c. 1, fols 158v-59r: “[L]os Iudios, que auia en Sepulueda, cogiendo a vn muchacho Christiano en la fiesta de la Pascua, y lleuandole a su Synagoga, le hizieron passar por todas las ignominias y affrentas, que sus pasados auian executado y hecho passar a Christo nuestro Redemptor, hasta venir a matar a azotes al dicho muchacho. Lo qual sabido por el dicho señor Obispo Dō Iuan Arias de Auila, y haziendo processo cōtra ellos, los mādò a todos entregar al braço seglar. Y leuantándose contra ellos vn motin de todos los labradores de aquella tierra, hombres y mugeres, que a voz de pueblo, y de comun consentimiento de la villa de Sepulueda, y apellidandose todos para esta vengança y castigo; assiendò de los dichos Iudios, a vnos aorcarō, a otros arrastraron, y a otros mataron con otros exquisitos tormentos.” The acrostic verses at the start of this history reveal that Lorenzo Calvete is a pseudonym assumed by Fray Juan de Calvete, its author (§§8r-v). María Eugenia Contreras Jiménez details how the anti-Jewish violence in Sepúlveda was recast as a response to ritual murder, how early modern accounts bear the influence of libels disseminated by Espina and others, how these accounts came to center on the year 1468 and how they attributed an Inquisitorial role to Bishop Arias (María Eugenia Contreras Jiménez, “Linaje y transición histórica: los Arias Dávila entre el medievo y la modernidad” [PhD dissertation, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2018], 630–39).

52 It is unclear that the modern Inquisition was in fact operating in Segovia prior to being banned by Arias. Although Colmenares, *Historia*, c. 34, § 18, p. 430, states that Segovia was the second city to have a tribunal under Torquemada, this is almost certainly incorrect. A document dated 11 September 1484, transcribed by Colmenares, indicates that a property seized from heretics should henceforth house the new tribunal. It thus appears that the Inquisition arrived in Segovia sometime in 1485.

53 Torquemada, “Instrucciones de 1484,” in Argüello, *Instrvcciones*, fols 7r-v, specifies how to deal with deceased persons suspected, accused or proven to be apostates. The rationale for prosecuting the dead and imposing penalties on their descendants is set forth in *Reportorium perutile*, s. v. “Defūctus,” fols 87r-89v. It is thus evident that such prosecutions did not begin with Innocent VIII’s *Cum sicut accepimus* (5 July 1486), which gave Inquisitors the power “hereticorum defunctorum corpora exhumare et igni tradi facere” (to exhume the bodies of dead heretics and have them delivered to the bonfire) (*Bulario Pontificio*, 132).

54 Sixtus IV, *Ut officium inquisitionis* (25 May 1483), addressed to Alfonso de Fonseca, Bishop of Santiago de Compostela, in *Bulario Pontificio*, 90–92. A second bull of the same title and date was addressed to Pedro González de Mendoza, Archbishop of Toledo. See Martínez Díez [ed.], *Bulario*, doc. 30, pp. 132–35. Fidel Fita surmises that Arias did not Judaize, but instead “fué denunciado como sospechoso de dar favor á la herejia quizá por haber estorbado los procedimientos de la Inquisición y oponerse con sus escritos y autoridad al curso de las sentencias fundamentadas en la delación de testigos *judíos* y en la observancia de los ritos *puramente talmúdicos*” (Fidel Fita, “La Inquisición de Torquemada: Secretos

its hold over clergy in its domains, and to check the wealth and power of the Arias family, certainly did.⁵⁵ Between confiscations and prohibitions on office-holding by the children and grandchildren of convicted apostates, the Arias Dávila family stood to suffer a great loss if the Inquisition were to try their patriarchs, Diego and Elvira, the deceased parents of Bishop Arias. A report on the bribes allegedly paid to avert this prosecution quotes the bishop as saying that Inquisitors “accused him of this crime [of apostasy] to steal his father’s estate, which was worth three hundred thousand ducats.”⁵⁶ This vast sum highlights the financial profit realized by Diego as *contador mayor* (comptroller general) of Castile under Isabel’s predecessor, Henry IV (r. 1454–74), this being a principal cause of resentment against *conversos* appointed to royal or civil office in the latter decades of the 15th century.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, because the first

íntimos,” *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia* 23 [1893]: 391–434, at 409, original emphasis).

- 55 Isabel may still have had in mind the shifting loyalties of the Arias Dávila family during the civil war (1454–68) between Henry IV and her younger brother Alfonso, as well as later, in 1476, when a group of townspeople seized the *alcázar* of Segovia from her majordomo, Andrés de Cabrera, in whose custody she had left her daughter, Princess Isabel. On the latter occasion, Bishop Arias cautioned the queen not to enter the city through the gate held by Cabrera, due to the townspeople’s resentment for his rule. This moved Isabel to make the famously irate reply: “Decid vosotros a esos caballeros e cibdadanos de Segovia que yo soy reyna de Castilla, y esta cibdad es mía” (Pulgar, *Crónica*, c. 78, 1:267–74, quotation on 1:270). The willfulness shown here by Isabel is characterized (in terms that should now be familiar to readers of this essay) in the *Crónica incompleta de los Reyes Católicos*, ed. Julio Puyol (Madrid: 1934), tit. 54, p. 325: “la reyna miró más a la virtud de su propia condición que a ningund daño nin interese que de aquello se le podiese seguir” (the queen had in view more the virtue of her own stance than any harm or interest that could redound to her from it).
- 56 “desia que por robar la hazienda de su padre, que valia trezientos mill ducados, le acusavan de este crimen” (quoted in Contreras Jiménez, “Linaje y transición,” app. 2, p. 860).
- 57 Complaints reflecting this animus were frequent during the reign of Henry IV and, as in the following statement from the Cortes of Toledo (1462), many centered on Diego Arias Dávila as *contador mayor*: “vuestra merçed bien sabe e avn es notorio en vuestro rregno quanto ynmoderada mente e contra toda rrazon e justiçia los vuestros contadores mayores e sus logares te[n]ientes e ofiçiales [...] lieuan mas derechos delos que han de aver por los preuillejos e libramientos e cartas e prouisiones e otras escripturas de que han de ser pagados” (*Cortes*, 3:726–27). Similar is the letter sent to Henry IV from Cigales (5 December 1464): “por los vuestros contadores mayores é por sus oficiales, los que actualmente é de continuo residen en los oficios, son fechos é se facen de cada dia muy grandes robos, é cohechos é tiranías á todos los que tienen mrs. [maravedies] algunos”; and: “algunas personas que han tenido é tienen el cargo de recibir é cobrar los pedidos é monedas de vuestros regnos é otras rentas, han fecho muchos males, é daños, é robos, é fuerzas é cohechos, de lo cual se han seguido grandes males á vuestros subditos é naturales” (in *Colección de documentos inéditos para la historia de España* 14 [Madrid: 1849]: 369–95, at 385, 389–90). See also the complaint sent to Henry from Burgos (28 September 1464): “es

accusations of Judaizing were made against Diego and Elvira in 1486,⁵⁸ some 20 years after their deaths in 1466 and 1463, respectively, it would appear that the real objective of prosecuting them was to subvert or extort Bishop Arias. This prosecution finally began on 7 July 1489.

As proceedings against the Arias Dávila family advanced, Bishop Arias appealed his case to Rome, and finally went there himself in March 1490. First, however, he disinterred and hid the remains of his ancestors so as to put them beyond the reach of the Inquisition, if not – as some alleged – to hide that they had been buried according to Jewish rites, as discussed below. Arias's actions at the papal court are known only indirectly, through the grumbles of others, yet they presumably went beyond the procedural objections effectively used to disqualify the judges in Segovia and to remove the case from their jurisdiction.⁵⁹ In contrast, Isabel's outrage at the change of venue is certain. A letter to Innocent VIII on 6 October 1490 again frames her dispute with the pope in terms of their respective efforts to defend Christian orthodoxy, shifting the focus from the substance of Bishop Arias's complaint to the officials who, she said, should pay it no heed in the name of justice. After a *pro forma* profession of humility and devotion to the pope, and an appeal to commiserate with her recent illness, Isabel began by tracing a series of oppositions – service / disservice, honor / dishonor, etc. – that cast her own actions in a favorable light. This contrast continues throughout Isabel's letter:

The arguments without any basis in truth of the said bishop and the persuasions of those who favor him there [in Rome], in such disservice to God and little honor for the holy apostolic see, have had more weight with your beatitude than the letters of my lord the king – who, with such travails for his royal person [and] damage and detriment to his realms,

muy notorio en vuestra corte, aver personas en vuestro palacio é cerca de vuestra persona infieles enemigos de nuestra santa fe católica, é otras aunque cristianos por nombre, muy sospechosos en la fe, [...] á los quales vuestra señoría ha sublimado en altos honores é estados é dignidades de vuestros regnos" (in *Memorias de don Enrique IV de Castilla*, vol. 2: Colección diplomática [Madrid: 1913], no. 97, pp. 328–29).

58 These accusations are inventoried and dated in Contreras Jiménez, "Linaje y transición," 982–1012.

59 "Apelación del obispo de Segovia y demás acusados de su familia" (7 July 1489), in Carlos Carrete Parrondo (ed.), *Fontes Iudaeorum Regni Castellae III. Proceso inquisitorial contra los Arias Dávila segovianos: Un enfrentamiento social entre judíos y conversos* (Salamanca: 1986), 252–53. Arias's principal argument was that the judicial powers invested in persons appointed by the pope (such as Tomás de Torquemada) cannot be delegated to others.

continuously strives to increase the Christian religion and uproot the abominable sin of heresy from it. These persuasions also have had more weight with you than my letters, for only the zeal and obligation of God's service moves me, as it should move any Christian whose cause [is] the exaltation of his holy Catholic faith.⁶⁰

Although Isabel does leave the pope room to back off of his support of Arias by allowing (at best half-heartedly) that he could be misinformed, the militancy of this dispatch, and of two more that followed in its wake, is extraordinary, particularly as Isabel returns time and again – explicitly – to Innocent's lack of zeal in the service of God. Indeed, the last of these letters concludes by stating that if it pleases Innocent to do what Isabel and Fernando propose, "he will honor and exalt what He whom he represents on earth wished and ordered." But if not, the queen and king will "follow through with what [they] must and are obliged, and strive to procure through [all] required means the convenient remedies that Catholic Christian princes must and are held accountable to procure in such cases for divine honor."⁶¹

More characteristic of Isabel's approach than direct confrontation are the instructions sent on 5 May 1490 to the Bishops of Badajoz and Astorga, Bernardino de Carvajal and Juan Ruiz de Medina, her solicitors at the papal

60 "Vuestra humil y devota fija la Reyna de Castilla, de Leon, de Aragon, de Sicilia etc. beso vuestros pies y sanctas manos y muy omilmente me encomiendo en vuestra Santidad, a la qual plega saber que en este mes de agosto que passo, fallandome hun poco enoiada de calenturas, el Rey mi señor e yo supimos por cartas de nuestros procuradores en essa su corte cómo [...] houieron mas lugar en vuestra beatitut las razones sin algun fundamento de verdad del dicho obispo y las persuaciones de los que alla en tanto deservicio de dios y poca honra de la sancta sede apostolica le fauorecen que no las cartas del Rey mi señor, que con tanto trabaio de su Real persona, daño y detrimento de sus Reynos, de continuo entiende en acrecentar la Religion xristiana y extirpar de aquella este abominable delicto de heregia, ni las mias, que solo me mueve a ello el zelo y obligacion del seruicio de dios, cuya es la causa y el enzalçamiento de su sancta fe catholica, como a qualquier xristiano deue mouer" (Isabel to Innocent VIII [6 October 1490], in Azcona, "Relaciones," doc. 3, p. 23). By listing the various realms over which she rules, Isabel all but negates her professions of humility and subservience. In the same vein, her mention of a bout of fever is seemingly designed to gain the pope's sympathy before she criticizes his failure to act as she asserts that he ought.

61 "si assi a vuestra santidad plugiere fazer, honrara y enzalçara lo que aquel quien representa en la tierra quiso y mando. [...]. Donde quiça otra cosa fuesse, [...] por mas complir con lo que deuenos y somos obligados entendemos en procurar por las vias deuidas los remedios oportunos quales los principes catolicos xristianos por la honra diuina en semeiante caso procurar deuen e son tenidos" (Isabel and Fernando to Innocent VIII [26 January 1491], in Azcona, "Relaciones," doc. 5, pp. 27–28).

court. These instructions set forth in minute detail not only the arguments to use in diverse contexts, but, moreover, the terms in which these arguments are to be expressed. Other letters indicate when to affect humility, and when to be forceful and adamant.⁶² Each section begins with the order “direys a Su Sanctedat” (tell his holiness), and the instructions as a whole direct Carvajal and Medina to assert that Arias’s intent in appealing to Rome was not simply to evade justice, but – more evilly – to undermine the Inquisition. The aim is to make clear that, however much one might sympathize with Arias’s desire to protect his family, his demand for a change of venue was no innocuous act.

As in other disputes with the pope, the central points of contention for Isabel and Fernando were revenue and jurisdiction in matters of concern to both the Church and the state, such as naming “native persons, faithful and loyal to us and to our realms” as bishops and to other benefices,⁶³ the distribution of proceeds from *cruzadas* (crusading bulls)⁶⁴ and, of course, the confiscation

62 Isabel and Fernando to Gonzalo Fernández de Heredia, their ambassador in Rome (30 August 1482), in Torre (ed.), *Documentos*, 1:259–63.

63 While this demand forms part of the crown’s instructions to Carvajal and Medina, the quotation is taken from the orders on the same topic sent to another group of solicitors, Íñigo López de Mendoza, Juan Arias del Villar and Juan Ruiz de Medina, on 20 January 1486: “direys a Su Santidad que [...] es razon que esten [las iglesias] en poder de personas nuestros naturales, fieles e leales a nos e a nuestros reynos” (Luis Suárez Fernández [ed.], *Política internacional de Isabel la Católica. Estudios y documentos*, 5 vols [Valladolid: 1966–72], 2:339). The term *naturales*, here translated as “native persons,” can also refer to naturalized subjects. In this vein, the instructions of 20 January 1486 go on to state: “Otrosy fareys saber a Su Santidad que en estos nuestros reynos sienpre se acostunbro e guardo que non fuesen proveydos de ningunos benefiçios ni dignidades eclesiasticas personas algunas estranjerias que non fuesen naturales nascidos en nuestros reynos de Castilla, de Leon o toviesen naturalezas en ellos” (Suárez Fernández [ed.], *Política internacional*, 2:344).

64 Besides figuring in the instructions given to Carvajal and Medina, the demand to retain all, rather than part, of the revenue from *cruzadas* appears in the orders sent to Antonio Geraldino in November 1484, and to Geraldino and Francisco de Rojas in March 1485 (Suárez Fernández [ed.], *Política internacional*, 2:305–09 and 2:329–30). In the first document, Isabel repeatedly insists that Geraldino tell the pope that her request to keep the third normally given to him from *cruzadas* is not due to greed: “Y especialmente le direis [*sic*] que esta guerra sus altesas no la fassen para acreçentar reynos e señorios ni quieren esta crusada para ayuntar grandes thesoros, que sy por acresçentar señorios con mucho menos trabajos y menos costas e peligros podran estender sus señorios y sy para ayuntar thesoros no derramarian tan largamente los suyos y de sus vasallos ni desecharian los que tan largamente el rey e moros del reyno de Granada les ofresçen solamente por aver pas, que seria mucho mayor suma que todo lo que de la crusada se puede aver” (306–07). Besides stressing the holiness of war against infidels and the cost to the crown, other orders sent to Juan Margarit (5 December 1484) argue that if the pope were to take

of property from apostates. In each case, Carvajal and Medina were to defend Spain's interests by asserting the sanctity and unselfishness of the monarchs' motives:

In response to what some would, maliciously, perhaps infer, do not fail to tell his holiness that [Arias's appeal] was caused by the confiscation of the said deceased persons' goods, which is expected to follow [the trial]. Our Lord, from whom nothing is hidden, is a good witness to the contrary, and he knows full well that what moved and still moves us in this prosecution by the holy office [of the Inquisition] is solely our zeal for his service and the exaltation of his holy Catholic faith, elevating this zeal and that exaltation above the great damages and depopulations that have for this reason followed and still follow in all of our realms, cities and lands. And indeed, in the matter of these deceased people prosecuted, it will truly be found that we have done honor to their own kin and relations in the event of confiscation, using their goods to endow and set in good stead all the sons, daughters and granddaughters that they left behind. And indeed, speaking with the said bishop about the business at hand, we offered the same to him, so that he not think that we were moved to it [i.e. to confiscate the goods of his parents] out of self-interest.

Therefore tell his holiness that great scandal has resulted from this commission [to the papal court] not only in that city and land [of Segovia], but even in all the realm. And Catholic Christians, who are zealous of divine service and honor, have been and are very troubled in their hearts to see that a priestly man like him has found such ways and means to impede justice. And, for this reason, the common people indeed say that justice falls on the lowly, but not on those who enjoy or could enjoy some favors, having recourse to that court [of the Curia in Rome], where such cases, in which our Lord is served so highly and our holy Catholic faith exalted, ought to be more deeply examined and favored by justice, and where those who go against justice ought to receive greater reprehension.⁶⁵

any part of the tithes and *cruzadas* for himself, the common people would refuse to pay (Torre [ed.], *Documentos*, 2:145–46).

65 “Y no dexeis en su caso de dezir a Su Sanctedat, en respuesta de lo que quiza algunos maliciosamente querrian inferir, que a esto daria causa la confiscacion, que se spera seguir de los bienes de los dichos defunctos, porque Nuestro Senyor, a quien nenguna cosa se esconde, es buen testigo del contrario y sabe bien que, lo que nos ha mouido y mueue acerca la prossequucion del Sancto Officio, es solamente el zelo de su seruicio y el enalçamiento de su sancta fe catholica, prefiriendo aquel y aquella a los grandes danyos

Although this letter was supposedly sent on behalf of both monarchs,⁶⁶ it is more in the style of the queen than of the king. For whereas Fernando was blunt to the point of arrogance in demanding what he believed was his right – telling Pope Sixtus IV, for example, that “we are determined never to permit anyone to exercise the duties of this office [of Inquisitor] against our will”⁶⁷ – Isabel used her own piety, and the travails of her husband, to justify the concessions that she sought: notably the power to nominate bishops, jurisdiction in Inquisitorial trials, dominion in newfound lands, control of revenue from *cruzadas*, *annatas* and *expolios*,⁶⁸ and the like. As Aristotle observed, rhetoric is the art of persuasion, and “the personal goodness revealed by the speaker [...] may almost be called the most effective means of persuasion he possesses.”⁶⁹ Both directly in her letters, and indirectly in what she instructed her solicitors to say to the pope, Isabel used the probity, zeal, devotion, humility, selflessness and sense of obligation found in her own self to argue the justice of her cause. This is not to say that Fernando did not also vaunt his good qualities, but rather that he did so to ask that the pope approve an end that was deserving on its

y depopulaciones que, a esta causa, se han seguido y siguen en todos nuestros reynos, ciudades y tierras; y ahun, en lo destos defunctos processados, se fallara por verdad que tenemos fecha merced de todos los bienes dellas, en el caso de confiscacion, a sus mismos deudos y parientes, para dotar y collocar todos los fijos y fijas y nietas que dellos quedan; y ahun, fablando con el dicho obispo en este negocio, le houimos offrecido lo mismo, porque no pensasse que respecto de algun interesse nos mouiesse a ello.

Direys pues a Su Sanctedat que desta comission ha resultado grande escandalo, no solo en aquella ciudad e tierra, mas ahun en todo el reyno, y han recebido y reciben mucha turbacion en los animos de los catholicos christianos, que zelan el seruicio y honra diuina, en ver que hombre perlado como el haya procurado tales vias y maneras para impedir la justicia; y a esta causa, quiere ahun dezir el vulgo que, en los menores, ha logar la justicia, mas no en los que tienen o pueden hauer algunos fauores, recorriendo a essa corte, adonde las causas semejantes, en que tanto Nuestro Señor es seruido y nuestra sancta fe catholica enalçada, han de ser mas miradas y con la justicia fauorecidas, y los contrarios della recibir mayor reprehension” (Torre [ed.], *Documentos*, 3:300–01).

66 The letter's authorship is uncertain insofar as it is signed only by the royal secretary, Juan de Coloma. The “We” used throughout could connote the voice and will of both monarchs, or of one alone. Some letters sent to Carvajal and Medina at the same time by Fernando alone (according to Torre) use the singular “I,” and others the royal “We.”

67 “contra voluntatem nostram huiusmodi officium exercere, nunquam permittere intendimus” (Fernando to Sixtus IV [13 May 1482], in Torre [ed.], *Documentos*, 1:217).

68 *Annatas* are the first year of rent from a benefice; *expolios* are the nonpatrimonial goods seized from a bishop's estate after his death. The crown's struggle with Rome over the apportionment of these important sources of revenue is discussed by Tarsicio de Azcona, *Isabel la Católica. Estudio crítico de su vida y su reinado*, 3rd ed. (Madrid: 1993), 619–26.

69 Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, bk 1, § 2 (1356a), 2:2155.

own merits.⁷⁰ It is also of note that Fernando insisted that things be done as he said so that God could be served, while Isabel instead called for the pope and others to accede to her wishes because she and Fernando already performed God's service, and always would.

Isabel's correspondence with the Holy See features numerous instances of such epideictic persuasion.⁷¹ I would like, however, to pass directly to the impact of Isabel's rhetoric, first on the pope, and second on how she would be viewed by later generations. Gaps in archival collections, together with the frequency of her (at times) indirect communications with Rome, make it difficult to match specific replies to the letters that most probably occasioned them. Nevertheless, various popes admitted that the conceits used by Isabel moved them to favor her wishes. In a brief dated 25 February 1483, Sixtus IV not only assented to Isabel's request to extend the Inquisition to Sicily, but dismissed the complaint that, in pursuing apostates of Jewish ancestry, she was guided "more by ambition and a desire for worldly goods, than by zeal of the faith and Catholic truth, or by the fear of God." Sixtus told her: "you should know for certain that no suspicion at all of that charge has even existed on our part," for indeed "nothing can persuade us of anything sinister regarding your devotion, or that of our aforementioned dearest son, your illustrious consort. Your sincerity, piety and reverence for God are known to us."⁷² Lest one ask how Sixtus came to revere Isabel's Christian goodness as he does, I would note that he explained this repeatedly in his brief, starting with the assertion: "Your letters themselves are full of piety and a singular reverence for God."⁷³ With

70 Fernando's arguments are often convoluted, as in his letter to his solicitor at the papal court, Gonzalo Beteta (23 May 1481): "porque cumple al servicio de Dios que, por el zelo que tengo al servicio suyo y a la religion y fe christiana, en los reynos mios d[e] Aragon, Valencia y Principado de Cathalunya, los heretges, si algunos se fallaran, sean punidos y castigados, y el officio de la Inquisicion sea fecho, segun a servicio de Dios, bien y augmentacion de la religion christiana conuiene, la qual no se puede bien fazer si por nuestro Sancto Padre no nos es atorgada bulla e prouision, con la qual me de facultat que, en los mis reynos y tierras, pueda poner inquisidores de la fe aquellas personas religiosas y de buena vida, fama y sciencia, que a mi paresciere mas ser servicio de Dios y bien de la fe catholica" (Torre [ed.], *Documentos*, 1:153).

71 See the examples in David A. Boruchoff, "Introduction: Instructions for Sainthood and Other Feminine Wiles in the Historiography of Isabel I," in Boruchoff [ed.], *Isabel la Católica*, 1–23.

72 "ambitione potius et bonorum temporalium cupiditate, quam zelo fidei et catholice veritatis, vel Dei timore, certo scias ne ullam quidem apud nos eius rei fuisse suspicionem [...]. [N]ihil [...] sinistri de tua vel prefati charissimi filii nostri, consortis tui Illustris devotione persuaden nobis potuit. Nota est nobis sinceritas et pietas vestra atque in Deum religio" (*Bulario Pontificio*, 84). Llorca incorrectly dates this brief to 23 February 1483.

73 "Plene sunt ipse littere tue pietate et in Deum singulari religione" (*Bulario Pontificio*, 80).

this opening statement in mind, it is clear that Sixtus was echoing the letters received from Isabel when he proceeded to tell her that he was “aware that this plague [of apostasy] has increased in Sicily,” that he had “come to know the many royal virtues that adorn your person as a divine gift, of which, however, we shall commend none more than, as you said, your affection and steadfastness in God’s reverence and in orthodox faith,” and that he was sure that Isabel would “not desist from pursuing such pious work with [her] customary devotion and diligence, as is pleasing to God and to us.”⁷⁴

The efficacy of Isabel’s *modus operandi* – her ability to persuade others by making herself the epitome of the pious cause for which she speaks – is, as stated above, on display elsewhere in her correspondence, both with the pope and with other religious and political leaders. It nevertheless bears observation that, whereas Isabel’s correspondents openly concede that her rhetoric has won them to her side – for it is impossible to deny the truth of conceits canonized by centuries of use in the Church – modern historians are often less circumspect. Even well-read scholars of the Inquisition accept at face value the claims advanced by Isabel, Fernando or their agents, misconstruing rhetoric as sincere exposition and arguments designed to sway others as objective statements of fact.

One example is the uncritical reiteration of both monarchs’ insistence that the Inquisition was established because they “prefer the service of God to

74 “Sentientes etiam huiusmodi pestem in Sicilia invaluisse” (*Bulario Pontificio*, 81); “cum multis regiis virtutibus personam tuam divino munere insignitam cognoscamus, nullam tamen magis quam istam in Deum religionem [et] in fidem orthodoxam affectum atque constantiam tuam commendaverimus” (*Bulario Pontificio*, 82–83); and “tam pium opus, Deo et nobis gratissimum, solita devotione ac diligentia prosequi non desinas” (*Bulario Pontificio*, 85). Similar is Sixtus IV’s bull *Lectis literis Maiestatis* (25 May 1483), which is addressed to Isabel and Fernando, yet refers to the correspondent in the singular. Sixtus begins “Lectis literis Maiestatis vestre, quas super Inquisitione heretice pravitatis scripsistis” (having read your majesty’s letters, which you wrote about the Inquisition of heretical wickedness) and goes on to laud the piety projected in them by his correspondent (undoubtedly Isabel): “ex quorum relatione prospeximus clarius id quod semper fuimus opinati, desiderium et preces in hac re vestras ex fidei puritate et orthodoxe religionis zelo manare” (From this report we perceived more clearly what we have always held as our opinion: that the objective of your desire and prayer in this matter springs from the purity of faith and from zeal for orthodox religion) (*Bulario Pontificio*, 87–90). Sixtus then accepts Isabel’s choice of Íñigo Manrique de Lara, Archbishop of Seville, as appellate judge of the Inquisition, both for cases in Spain and for appeals pending in Rome. Complaints about abuses in the appeals process subsequently led Sixtus to rescind these powers and to insist that even those found guilty of heresy have the right to appeal their convictions to Rome. See Sixtus IV, *Etsi Romani Pontificis* (2 August 1483), in *Bulario Pontificio*, 92–102, especially 94–96.

our own.”⁷⁵ More complex is the diffusion of Isabel’s claim that, before leaving Segovia for Rome, Bishop Arias disinterred the remains of his ancestors, not to protect them, but to obstruct justice: “at night, secretly, he removed the bones of his father and mother from the Monastery of La Merced, where they were buried, and it is not known where he took them. It is believed that he did this so the form of [their burial] not be known, because some witnesses testify that they were buried as Jews.”⁷⁶ In passing from historian to historian over the centuries, these assertions, which Carvajal and Medina were told to repeat to Pope Innocent VIII, would become more authoritative (*factual* in the narrowest sense) even as new elements accrued, such as the idea that Arias carried off his parents’ remains to Rome. Despite the lack of evidence, this claim has been reported as a fact even by respected authors.⁷⁷ The introduction to Gustave A. Bergenroth’s collection of archival documents (1862) sheds light on the dynamics of this process and its effect on our understanding of Isabel’s reign. In presenting Carvajal and Medina’s orders, Bergenroth at times puts Isabel’s words within quotation marks, albeit without indicating that she intended to have her solicitors repeat them to the pope. At other times he records the

75 This is Henry Kamen’s translation of Fernando’s 1484 letter to his lieutenant, Enric of Aragon (see the full text at note 25 above), which Kamen mistakenly dates to 1486 and offers as an example of “the totally uncompromising firmness with which [Fernando] insisted that the Inquisition be accepted everywhere, regardless of consequences” (Henry Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition: A Historical Revision* [New Haven: 1998], 68). Even as he refers to Fernando’s “lofty principles,” against which Catalan opponents of the Inquisition could not compete, William Monter presents Fernando’s 1484 letter as evidence not of his political astuteness, but of his “inflexible policy” (William Monter, *Frontiers of Heresy: The Spanish Inquisition from the Basque Lands to Sicily* [Cambridge, UK: 1990], 13–14).

76 “bien se ha visto claramente que no era aquella la verdadera causa de sus diffugios, sino poner empachos para que la justicia no houiesse lugar; ca por dilatar e impedir esto, se fue para Segouia a su obispado, y [...] de noche, ocultamente, saco los huesos de los dichos sus padre y madre del monesterio de la Merced, do stauan enterrados, e no se sabe do los lleuo, lo qual se cree fizo porque algunos de los testigos deponen que stauan sepultados como judios, affin que no se supiesse la forma dello” (Torre [ed.], *Documentos*, 3:300).

77 This claim is made by Cardenal Francisco Mendoza y Bovadilla (1508–66): “Juan Arias [...] fue obispo de Segovia y procedió la Inquisicion contra su madre: sacó los huesos de la sepultura y con ellos se fue á Roma” (Francisco Mendoza y Bovadilla, *Tizón de la nobleza de España* [Madrid: 1849], xxxi-ii). Written amid disputes over inheritances in 1494, for which some of its claims are perhaps more political than factual, the will of Bishop Arias’s nephew, Juan Arias, future Count of Puñonrostro, states that the body of his father, Diego Arias, was taken to Rome “con todos los otros cuerpos de mis antecesores” (quoted in Contreras Jiménez, “Linaje y transición,” 685). Referring to persons who fled the Inquisition, Ladero Quesada writes: “A Roma lo hizo, por ejemplo, el obispo de Segovia, Juan Arias Dávila, en 1490, llevándose consigo los restos mortales de su padre” (Ladero Quesada, *Los Reyes Católicos*, 221).

substance – or the exact language – of Isabel's letter as though it were his own historical account. He states:

[Arias] went in the dead of night to the churchyard of the Convent of La Merced, dug up the bones of his ancestors, and hid them in a place where they could not be found. He himself proceeded to Rome. As soon as Queen Isabella was informed of his journey, she wrote a long letter to her ambassadors at the papal court giving them instructions what they were to say to the Pope and the Cardinals. The Bishop of Segovia, she said, had exhumed the bones only in order to deprive the Inquisition of proof that they had been buried after the Jewish fashion. "I have," she said, "caused great calamities, and depopulated towns, lands, provinces, and kingdoms," but she protested that she had acted thus from love of Christ and his Holy Mother.⁷⁸

Even judicious historians consequently accept the truth of Isabel's assertions. Henry Charles Lea states in his *History of the Inquisition of Spain* (1906–07): "it was in evidence that [Arias] dug up at night, from the cemetery of the convent of la Merced, the bones of his ancestors and concealed them, in order to destroy proof of their interment in the Jewish fashion."⁷⁹ Similar is Cecil Roth in *A History of the Marranos* (1932): "[Arias] had the remains of his ancestors exhumed, in order to destroy proof of the fact that they had been interred in accordance with Jewish tradition."⁸⁰ I will not name more recent authors who continue to repeat these assertions.

Isabel's claims about her intentions and those of her adversaries have been influential due to the seductiveness of *topoi* (rhetorical commonplaces), as Aristotle advised,⁸¹ and also because of their removal from their original context, as when the instruction "direys a Su Sanctedat" (tell his holiness) is omitted in quoting or glossing the orders to her solicitors. The conceits that Isabel used to project piety, zeal, humility, obedience, and devotion – in brief, her Christian virtue – are in no way original, and were not intended to be, even if most scholars today are unfamiliar with the classical and theological models

78 Gustave Adolph Bergenroth, intro., *Calendar of Letters, Despatches, and State Papers, Relating to the Negotiations Between England and Spain*, vol. 1 (London: 1862), xlv.

79 Lea, *A History of the Inquisition of Spain*, 2:42.

80 Cecil Roth, *A History of the Marranos* (Philadelphia: 1932), 382, n. 9.

81 "even hackneyed and commonplace maxims are to be used, if they suit one's purpose: just because they are commonplace, everyone seems to agree with them, and therefore they are taken for truth" (Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, bk 2, § 21 [1395a], 2:2222–23).

upon which they draw. This lack of originality is precisely what invests Isabel's speeches and letters with the air of sanctity and authority that her correspondents found reassuring.

It is also of note that many of the arguments that Isabel's solicitors were directed to use with the pope echo complaints previously made to her or her royal ancestors. For example, she and Fernando issued the following instruction on 20 January 1486 as part of the effort to win the right to nominate bishops:

You shall first tell His Holiness that he well knows how the kings of glorious memory, our progenitors, conquered these our realms and lands, and, spilling their blood, won them from the Moors, foes of our holy Catholic faith; and at lance point they drove the name of Mohammed from these realms and placed and put into them the name of Jesus Christ, our redeemer. [...] [I]n consideration of this, prior holy fathers were accustomed to provision churches at the request of the said kings, our progenitors, with worthy and well-deserving native persons of these realms, and not otherwise, considering that fortresses and towns and villages of the said churches ought rightly to be in the power of our native persons, faithful and loyal to us and to our realms, and not of foreign persons, from which great damages and intolerable inconveniences could result to us and to our said realms.⁸²

These assertions – as well as others made in instructions sent to the crown's solicitors on other occasions⁸³ – bear an unmistakable affinity to those of the

82 “Primeramente direys a Su Santidad que bien sabe en como los reyes de gloriosa memoria nuestros progenitores conquistaron estos nuestros reynos e tierras e con derramamiento de su sangre los ganaron de los moros enemigos de nuestra santa fee catolica e alañaron e echaron dellos el nombre de Mahomad e colocaron e pusieron en ellos el nombre de Ihesuchristo nuestro redentor [...], lo qual considerado por los santos padres pasados acostumbraron proveer de las yglesias a suplicacion de los dichos reyes nuestros progenitores a personas dignas e bien meresçientes naturales dellos e no en otra manera, considerando las fortalezas e villas e lugares de las dichas yglesias, las quales es razon que esten en poder de personas nuestros naturales, fieles e leales a nos e a nuestros reynos e non en personas estranjerass” (Suárez Fernández [ed.], *Política internacional*, 2:339). Isabel and Fernando subsequently reiterated these claims and ordered their solicitors to obtain a bull to confirm their demands: “Por ende suplicareys a Su Santidad de aqui adelante le plega guardar esta costumbre que sienpre fue guardada en nuestros reynos e no quiera hazer provision alguna a personas que no sean naturales dellos o que no tengan la dicha naturaleza y nos mande dar su bulla” (Suárez Fernández [ed.], *Política internacional*, 2:345).

83 See, for example, Isabel and Fernando's instructions to the bishop of Tuy, the abbot of Sahagún and Juan Arias del Villar (1479): “porque muchas dellas tyenen muchas çibdades

petition presented to King Henry IV at the Cortes of Santa María de Nieva (1473) to ensure that only native residents be appointed to benefices within his purview. Henry was also told to demand that the pope respect the same allegedly time-honored policy in filling higher ecclesiastical offices:

Your highness can perceive how much greater reason the kings of glorious memory, your progenitors, had for requesting and having churches and benefices for their natives, and with how much reason past holy fathers were moved to gratify by this means the kings of Castile and of León, who, with fervent devotion and Catholic and spirited hearts, spilling their blood and that of their loyal subjects and natives, won and freed this your land from the infidel Moors, enemies of our holy Catholic faith, and put it under the obedience of the holy apostolic faith[:] and land that was so long soiled by the Mohammedan sect was recovered and cleansed by them. [...] [E]nlightened by this true knowledge, and moved by the force of good conscience and gratitude, in some cases expressly and in others silently, the said holy fathers wished to permit that ecclesiastical offices and benefices of any rank that became vacant by any means in your realms be given, as they always had been given, to natives of these realms [...], so that foreign persons not have the offices of your realms, nor occupy their fortresses and churches.⁸⁴

e villas e fortalezas e castillos asy en los dichos nuestros reynos como en los confines dellos, cuple mucho a la conservación e tranquilidad de nuestro real estado que las personas que dellas fueren proveydas sean nuestros naturales e muy fiables a nos e a nuestros reynos. Por ende suplicareys a Su S. que non quiera proveer de aqui adelante de las dichas dignidades nin de ningunas dellas syn espeçiales suplicaçiones nuestras que enbiamos a Su S. señalando la dignidad que es vaca e la persona por quien suplicaremos. E porque nos entendemos suplicar por personas ydonias e fiables a nos e a nuestros reynos, Su S. non quiera deferir las provisyones de las tales prelaturas e dignidades" (Suárez Fernández [ed.], *Política internacional*, 1:426).

- 84 "bien puede conoçer vuestra alteza quanto mayor rrazon ouieran los reyes, de gloriosa memoria, vuestros progenitores, de pedir e auer para sus naturales las yglesias e beneficios de sus reynos, e con quanta rrazon los Padres santos pasados se mouieron a gratificar en esto alos rreyes de Castilla e de Leon, los quales con deuoçion feruiente e catolicos e animosos coraçones, con derramamiento dela sangre suya e de sus leales subditos e naturales, ganaron e libraron esta vuestra tierra delos ynfieles moros, henemigos de nuestra santa fee catolica, e la pusieron so la obidiencia dela santa fee apostolica, e la tierra que por tantos tienpos fue de antes ensuziada con la seta mahometica, fue por ellos rrecobrada e alinpiada [...], e los dichos santos Padres alunbrados por este verdadero conocimiento e moudos por la virtud dela buena conçiencia e gradeçimiento, en algunos expresa mente e en otros casos callada mente, quisieron tolerar quelas dignidades e beneçiios eclesiasticos de qualquier calidad que fuesen, que en qual quier manera vacasen en estos vuestros reynos, se dieseen commo syenpre se dieron alos naturales dellos [...], por que no ayan

Needless to say, both documents exaggerate the concessions made to prior rulers, which assigned a right to patronage and revenue only in the case of “churches and chapels that Spanish kings and their successors in battle may have seized in Moorish lands, or may cause to be built there in that realm.”⁸⁵ In both cases, as well, financial considerations complicate what is ostensibly a religious and military imperative, insofar as benefices given to foreigners (above all *in absentia*) entail the outflow of capital.

The misconceptions perhaps knowingly created by contemporaneous authors sympathetic to Isabel and Fernando’s intentions have colored later accounts, especially those that focus on the success of the monarchs’ policies rather than the struggle to implement them. A case in point are the chapters in Pulgar’s *Crónica* that recount how the pope was brought, as seen above, to accept the monarchs’ demand that only “native persons, faithful and loyal to us and to our realms,” hold ecclesiastical offices in their lands. The expression and the order of the assertions that were made to this end in the dispute, as recorded by Pulgar, leave no doubt that he had the orders sent to the monarchs’ solicitors before his eyes when writing. However, instead of designating as claims the sacrifices made for the faith by prior monarchs, and the right to nominate trusted subjects even to positions of religious authority, Pulgar represents them as facts.⁸⁶ The legitimacy of the crown’s claims indeed appears

las dignidades de vuestros rreynos ni ocupen las fortalezas delas yglesias dellos personas estrangeras” (*Cortes*, 3:856–57).

85 “Regi Hispaniarum necnon ejus successoribus illorumque militaribus Ecclesias et Cappellas, quas ipsi in [terris?] praedictorum Sarracenorum caperent, ut [*sic for et*] in regno inibi aedificari facerent” (Eugenius IV, *Laudibus et honore* [24 July 1436], addressed to John II of Castile, transcribed and confirmed in Innocent VIII, *Provisionis nostrae* [15 May 1486], addressed to Fernando and Isabel). The compound document is published as appendix 3 in Juan de Mariana, *Historia general de España*, vol. 8 (Valencia: 1795), XXXVII.

86 “el Rey e la Reyna [...] suplicaron al Papa que le pluguiese hacer aquella y las otras provisiones de las yglesias que vacasen en sus reynos a personas naturales dellos, e por quien ellos suplicasen, & no a otros algunos.

Lo qual con justa causa acostunbraron hazer los pontífices pasados, consyderando que los reyes sus progenitores, con grandes trabajos & derramamiento de su sangre, & como cristianísimos príncipes, avían ganado la tierra de los moros, enemigos de nuestra santa Fe católica, colocando en ella el nonbre de nuestro Redentor Jesu Cristo, & estirpando el nonbre de Mahomad. Lo qual les daua derecho de patronadgo en todas las iglesias de sus reynos e señoríos, para que deviesen ser proveídas, a suplicación suya, personas naturales, gratas & fieles a ellos, e no otros algunos, consyderando la poca notiçia que los estrangeros tenían en las cosas de sus reynos. Dezían asymismo que las iglesias tenían muchas fortalezas, & algunas dellas frontera de los moros, donde era neçesario poner grand guarda para la defensión de la tierra; e que era grand deservicio suyo ponerlas en poder de personas que no fuesen naturales de sus reynos” (Pulgar, *Crónica*, c. 125, 1:452–53). The division of Pulgar’s text into two paragraphs in this edition increases the impression that

to be validated by the pope, who revokes his choice of his own nephew for the see of Cuenca in favor of the candidate picked by Isabel and Fernando. Their dispute with the pope thus becomes a testament to their Christian piety, as Pulgar says in conclusion: “they would request [vacant offices] for religious men of honest life and letters, considering that public affairs were well governed only inasmuch as the churches’ prelates and ministers were men of good life, learned and devout, and preachers of good doctrines, from whom all might receive an example of good living.”⁸⁷

No longer tied to Isabel’s orders as to what her agents were to tell the pope, Pulgar’s report has found its way into most histories published in the past century, whose authors I will again refrain from naming. Even the otherwise fastidious William Thomas Walsh ends his narration of the conflict over the choice of a bishop for Cuenca by repurposing Pulgar’s words, thereby making Isabel’s promise to pick good men a certain fact: “The Queen henceforth nominated all bishops appointed in her realms, and it is generally agreed that she named ‘learned men of good lives, and preachers of good doctrines, whose lives were an example to others.’”⁸⁸ It is of note that when the issue of ecclesiastical appointments arises again in Pulgar’s history, there is only passing reference to the letters by means of which the monarchs challenged the pope’s intent to name his vice-chancellor as archbishop of Seville, even as Pulgar repeats their words at times *verbatim*. Instead, these words commonly appear in his work as anonymous and thus seemingly objective statements: “as [the church of Seville] was so eminent, it was necessary that it be provisioned with a native person. [...] And they certified to his holiness that, holding to what befits their consciences as Catholic princes, whenever any church happened to become vacant in their realms, they would always request it of him for worthy persons, who would do what befits God’s service and his.” This claim, recast as truth, is again reaffirmed by the pope: “having this their information, the pope acquiesced to the request of the king and queen.”⁸⁹

the crown’s right to nominate candidates to ecclesiastical positions is a fact, rather than a claim. Although this passage appears in Pulgar’s account of a dispute dating to 1482, it clearly echoes the instructions sent by Isabel and Fernando to their solicitors in Rome on 20 January 1486 (cited in part in note 82 above).

- 87 “suplicauan por personas religiosas, omes de honesta vida & letrados, considerando que tanto las cosas públicas eran bien gouernadas, quanto los perlados & ministros de las yglesias eran onbres de buena vida, doctos & devotos, & predicadores de buenas doctri-
nas, de quien todos tomasen enxenplo de bien biuir” (Pulgar, *Crónica*, c. 125, 1:455).
- 88 William Thomas Walsh, *Isabella of Spain: The Last Crusader* (New York: 1930), 261.
- 89 “aquella iglesia de Sevilla, de la qual por ser tan ynsigne era neçesario que fuese proueyda de persona natural [...]. E çertificaron a Su Sanctidat que, guardando lo que cunplía a sus conçiencias como católicos príncipes, quando alguna iglesia acaecía vacar en sus reynos,

Later writers, particularly those invested in one way or another in the campaign to beatify Isabel, would add to this mutation of rhetoric into historical fact. For example, by failing perhaps carelessly to put within quotation marks some of Pulgar's already derivative statements about the monarchs' right to have "their own native persons, for whom they have requested appointments,"⁹⁰ the Jesuit Feliciano Cereceda argues the orthodoxy of what were in fact innovations in order to assert more broadly that in Isabel's time, as in his (under Francisco Franco), Spain has always defended the true essence of Christianity. Something similar occurs in the testimonies to Isabel's Christian virtue compiled by Vicente Rodríguez Valencia, canon-librarian of Valladolid's cathedral chapter and postulator for Isabel's cause. These testimonies were intended as supporting evidence for the *Congregatio pro causis sanctorum* (Congregation for the Causes of Saints) and would finally comprise some 27 volumes. Rodríguez Valencia's presentation of Sixtus IV's brief of 25 February 1483 (see above) cites the pope's praise for Isabel's love of faith and orthodoxy, piety, religious sentiment, constancy, holy purpose and royal virtues. Yet it suppresses what Rodríguez Valencia calls "the rumor or sinister report," that is, the accusation disavowed in the brief that Isabel was guided "more by ambition and a desire for worldly goods, than by zeal of the faith and Catholic truth or by the fear of God." With this ellipsis, the pope's final encomia seem unbounded: "Be certain that we have not harbored the least suspicion of it. ... Nor has anyone been able to persuade us of anything that might go against your religious devotion and that of your royal husband. The sincerity of your

sienpre le suplicauan por personas dignas, & quales cunplían a seruicio de Dios & suyo [...]. El Papa, avida su ynformación, condeçendió a la suplicación del Rey e de la Reyna" (Pulgar, *Crónica*, c. 166, 2:140). As seen in note 85 above, Innocent VIII's bull of 15 May 1486 reaffirmed only the monarchs' rights for churches and chapels in lands seized from Muslims in battle. His acquiescence to the crown's choice for archbishop of Seville should therefore not be seen as a precedent for future vacancies, as one might assume from Pulgar's report. Seemingly angered by the pope's rebuff, Isabel and Fernando requested and received a certified copy of Martin V's bull *Sedis apostolicae* (8 October 1421), which granted John II the power to nominate candidates for "vacantibus Ecclesiis Cathedralibus Regnorum tuorum" (vacant cathedral churches in [his] realms) and "magistratibus Ordinum militarium" (grand masters of the military orders) of Santiago, Calatrava and Alcántara. Both were subject to papal confirmation. This bull appears in *Papeles sobre jurisdicción y facultades de la Cámara de Castilla*, Biblioteca Nacional de España, Ms. 13014, fols 96r-97r, quotations on 96r.

⁹⁰ "a personas naturales dellos, por quien ellos suplicasen" (Feliciano Cereceda, *Semblanza espiritual de Isabel la Católica* [Madrid: 1946], 206). These words are lifted (with the omission of a conjunction) from Pulgar, *Crónica de los Reyes Católicos*, c. 125, pp. 452-53, as documented in note 86 above.

religious piety toward God is well known to us.” These encomia indeed become a universal judgement that Rodríguez Valencia characterizes in advance as “the opinion of the popes [*sic*, in the plural] about the queen.”⁹¹ Such ‘cherry-picking’ is even more extensive in the Archbishop of Granada, Rafael García y García de Castro’s panegyric, the aptly titled *Virtudes de la Reina Católica* (Virtues of the Catholic Queen, 1961). To give just one example from this volume on which scholars have repeatedly drawn, instead of going back to the original documents, for the past six decades, García y García de Castro concludes his gloss of Sixtus IV’s brief of 25 February 1483 by stating: “I have here a most eloquent testimony of the queen’s holy purpose, of her diligence in defending the orthodox faith, of her fortitude in facing an able and strong foe, of her sincere piety and her religion. This testimony could not come from a higher authority, nor be more directly on target.”⁹²

Despite affecting an academic tone, the apologetic portrait of Isabel and her endeavors in the officially authorized *Positio super vita, virtutibus et fama sanctitatis* or *Position Paper on the Life, Virtues and Reputation of Sanctity* (1990) – a compendium of the enormous archive of texts amassed by Rodríguez Valencia and his successors – also mines documents for evidence, not only of Isabel’s Christian virtue (piety, humility, devotion, obedience to the pope, etc.), but also of her exemplary performance of royal, spousal and “motherly” duties. By putting its conclusions ahead of, and apart from, the excerpts that ostensibly support them, the *Positio* sets forth a purposefully uncomplicated series of *exempla*, such as the following (from the general introduction) about the polemic with Rome over the election of bishops: “She energetically asserted her right to ‘request’ (it was not royal patronage) with strong tensions with the Roman Curia; bishops had to be holy, lettered and resident; and, in the

91 “Pero lo que, en realidad, hace más a nuestro propósito, que es recoger la opinión de los Papas sobre la Reina, es lo que añade [...]: *Ten la certeza de que Nos no hemos abrigado sobre ello la menor sospecha ... Ni nadie ha podido persuadirnos de cosa que vaya contra tu religiosa devoción y la de tu regio esposo. Nos es bien conocida la sinceridad de vuestra piedad religiosa para con Dios*” (Vicente Rodríguez Valencia [ed.], *Isabel la Católica en la opinión de españoles y extranjeros*, 3 vols [Valladolid: 1970], 1:49, cursive and final ellipsis by Rodríguez Valencia).

92 “He aquí un elocuentísimo testimonio de los santos propósitos de la Reina, de su diligencia en defender la fe ortodoxa, de su fortaleza en hacer cara a un enemigo hábil y fuerte, de su piedad sincera y de su religión. No podía venir de más alto ni dar más directamente en el blanco” (Rafael García y García de Castro, *Virtudes de la Reina Católica* [Madrid: 1961], 271). García y García de Castro’s treatment of the orders sent to Carvajal and Medina on 15 December 1488 is similar in recasting assertions that were to be repeated to the pope as testimony to the monarchs’ virtue; for example: “somos nosotros los mas obedientes, y mas zeldores del seruicio de Dios y de las cosas de la Yglesia” (276–77). For the original instructions, see Torre [ed.], *Documentos*, 3:171.

last regard, natives. She thus obtained an exemplary episcopate from the Renaissance popes.”⁹³ The summaries made in the thematic chapters of the *Positio* are more narrow in comparison. Yet they too depart significantly from the documents they purport to represent, most of which can be accessed only in the 27 unpublished volumes prepared by Rodríguez Valencia and his successors. As we have seen, Isabel and Fernando laid claim to the right to nominate bishops because of the deeds performed on behalf of the faith by themselves and their forebears in battle. The authors of the *Positio* offer a more rational and “historical” explanation, even as they remit to letters, briefs, and decrees that in fact cite only the concessions accorded to military service. For example, they assert:

Custom and tradition based on the Reconquest have force; but the principal reason is that the Archbishop of Toledo, like all bishops of Spain, [...] has, in addition to a religious and ecclesiastical function, a *temporal* function, mainly *economic and social*, most especially *military*. The Archbishop of Toledo, in particular, is the third magnate in Castile, after the king and his heir, the prince. He is every bit a feudal lord, with temporal dominion over numerous towns and confirmed tributaries; but above all he is a nobleman who possesses armies (pikes, lances, etc., in the speech of the time) and splendid fortresses and castles.⁹⁴

93 “hizo valer enérgicamente su derecho de ‘suplicación’ (no era patronato real) con fuertes tensiones con la Curia romana; los Obispos debían ser santos, letrados y residentes; y para esto último, nacionales. Así obtuvo de los Papas del Renacimiento un episcopado ejemplar” (*Beatificationis et canonizationis servae dei Elisabeth 1* [v. *Isabel la Católica*], *reginae Castellae in Hispania* [1451–1504]: *Positio super vita, virtutibus et fama sanctitatis ex officio concinnata*, *Congregatio pro Causis Sanctorum Officium Historicum* 221 [Valladolid: 1990], xiii).

94 “Tiene su fuerza la costumbre y tradición fundada en la reconquista; pero la razón principal es que tanto el Arzobispo de Toledo como todos los obispos de España, [...] tienen además de la función religiosa y eclesiástica una función *temporal*, principalmente *económica y social*, muy especialmente *militar*. El Arzobispo de Toledo en particular, es en Castilla el tercer magnate, después del Rey y del Príncipe heredero. Es todo un señor feudal, con señorío temporal sobre numerosas villas y situados tributarios; pero sobre todo es un Noble que posee ejércitos (picas, lanzas, etc., en lenguaje de entonces), y espléndidas fortalezas y castillos” (*Beatificationis et canonizationis*, 340, original emphasis). The editors repeat this rationale for royal nominations several times and conclude: “Preciso es reconocer que no fue un afán de absolutismo lo que movía a los Reyes Católicos a pedir algún control en la provisión de las sedes episcopales; lo deseaban para extirpar los abusos existentes de *irresidencia* y de *acumulación de beneficios*, no menos que por la *seguridad del Estado*, ya que los obispos eran poderosos señores feudales con su considerable peso económico, social y militar en el gobierno de la Nación” (*Beatificationis et canonizationis*, 344, original emphasis).

This explanation is undoubtedly valid, yet it misrepresents the arguments actually made by Isabel and Fernando. For, even when they did mention – in documents not adduced by the authors of the *Positio* – the “many cities and towns and fortresses and castles, both in our said realms and on their borders,” controlled by certain bishops, priors, grand masters of military orders and the like, their purpose was to insist that the persons holding such benefices be “competent and worthy of our confidence and that of our realms.”⁹⁵ Far from affirming the feudal powers and privileges of high churchmen, the monarchs moved to curtail them. In the same documents, they asked the pope for the right to replace rebellious ecclesiastics with “others acceptable to us,” and “to proceed against all or any prelates and clerics who may do us disservice.”⁹⁶ Simply put, the *Positio* does injustice to the archival record by taking statements favorable to its cause out of context,⁹⁷ by ignoring others that contradict them and by presuming to rationalize Isabel’s demands and decisions in ways that she herself did not choose or think to do. I will again refrain from citing other, more recent works that engage in similar practices.

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In his celebrated essay *On the Dignity of Man* (1486), Giovanni Pico della Mirandola maintained that God endowed each human being with the freedom to determine his own identity and place in the universe, for which he addressed the first man, Adam, as follows: “We have given you [...] no fixed seat, nor proper appearance, nor duty of any sort peculiar just to you, so that, whatever seat, whatever appearance, whatever duties you may securely choose,

95 Instructions of 1479, in Suárez Fernández [ed.], *Política internacional*, 1:426. Cited in note 83 above.

96 “proçeder contra los perlados e clerigos que ovieren cometido crimen de rebelion y les puedan privar de sus dignidades, prelaturas e benefiçios e conferirlos a otros a nos açebtos, e asy mesmo pueda proçeder contra todos e cualesquier perlados e clerigos que fueren deservidores nuestros” (Instructions of 1479, in Suárez Fernández [ed.], *Política internacional*, 1:431). This is but one of a long series of powers that the monarchs’ solicitors are ordered to request from the pope.

97 Like many recent studies, the *Positio* cites Pulgar’s derivative comment that Isabel appointed “religious men of honest life and letters, considering that public affairs were well governed only inasmuch as the churches’ prelates and ministers were men of good life, learned and devout, and preachers of good doctrines, from whom all might receive an example of good living,” in order to assert that Isabel always used the powers granted by the pope “tan recta y acertadamente que han merecido los elogios de los contemporáneos y de la posteridad” (*Beatificationis et canonizationis*, 341–42).

you may have and possess them according to your desire, according to your judgement.”⁹⁸ Although the term *self-fashioning* is of recent coinage,⁹⁹ the practice itself was frequent in the Renaissance, used to enhance one’s status in courtly society and to secure political and economic concessions. Models were important in both contexts because, like *topoi*, they were familiar and therefore reassuring to the audience that the person emulating them wished to impress. This was particularly the case when religion or the public good was involved.

As we have seen, to enable the reform of institutions, administrative procedures or groups that were resistant to change due to vested interests, Queen Isabel I crafted a *persona*¹⁰⁰ – an image of piety, humility, integrity, zeal, and selfless service to the faith and/or nation – by invoking time-honored conceits with self-reference in her letters and speeches. Without questioning the veracity of this *persona*, it was a highly effective means of persuasion, especially because Isabel skillfully adapted her rhetoric to the demands of the conflict at hand and (equally vitally) to the expectations of her audience. This is patent in her addresses to the Cortes of Castile as well as in the instructions to her solicitors in Rome. As Aristotle observed:

[P]eople love to hear stated in general terms what they already believe in some particular connection. [...] There is [moral] character in every speech in which the [moral] choice is conspicuous and maxims always produce this effect. [...] [T]he utterance of them amounts to a general declaration of what should be chosen; so that, if the maxims are sound, they display the speaker as a man of sound [moral] character.¹⁰¹

This insight also informed the works composed by Isabel’s first chroniclers, who understood that it was insufficient to extol her comportment and policies to convince us of the exemplarity of her reign. Instead, they followed Isabel’s lead by linking her rule to general principles of governance backed by classical

98 “Nec certā sedem: nec propriā faciem nec munus ullum peculiare tibi dedimus [...] ut quam sedem / quā faciem / quæ munera tute optaueris: ea pro uoto: pro tua sentētia habeas & possideas” (Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *Oratio quedam elegantissima*, in *Commentationes* [Bologna: 1496], T4v).

99 The first scholarly use of this term is normally attributed to Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: 1980).

100 According to the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, a *persona* is “a mask, esp. as worn by actors,” and thus by extension, with or without deception, “the part played by a person in life, etc., a position, role, character” (*Oxford Latin Dictionary*, ed. P.G.W. Glare [Oxford: 1982], 1356).

101 Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, bk 2, § 21 (1395b), 2:2223–24, punctuation slightly altered.

authorities. As we have again seen, Pulgar quickly passed from the nominees endorsed by Isabel and Fernando to the *desiderata* of anyone holding an ecclesiastical (or, for that matter, civil) appointment: “[the queen and king] would request [vacant offices] for religious men of honest life and letters, considering that public affairs were well governed only inasmuch as the churches’ prelates and ministers were men of good life, learned and devout, and preachers of good doctrines, from whom all might receive an example of good living.”¹⁰²

I do not mean to suggest that Isabel did not measure up to the supremely virtuous *persona* projected to overcome resistance to her aspirations at home and abroad. Indeed, we might receive into evidence the assessment made by Baldassare Castiglione in *Il libro del cortegiano* (Book of the courtier, 1528). For while Castiglione repeatedly cautions us that it is one thing to depict how a perfect courtier ought to behave and another far more difficult thing to become one in fact,¹⁰³ he does not waver in saying that “there has not been in our time a more shining example on earth of true goodness, of greatness of spirit, of prudence, of religion, of honesty, of courtesy, of liberality, in sum, of every virtue, than Queen Isabel.”¹⁰⁴ It is curious that Castiglione proceeds to illustrate this assertion with a single deed, selected from among many others: “when she came to rule, she found the greater part of Castile occupied by grandees; nonetheless, she recovered it all so legitimately and in such a way that the same people who were deprived [of their estates or privileges] remained very endeared to her and content to relinquish what they possessed.”¹⁰⁵ The text implicitly links Isabel’s reputation for virtue and the success of her political maneuvers, her *persona* and her mastery of others. When Castiglione’s *Cortegiano* appeared in Spanish in 1534, one of the very few changes made by the translator, Juan Boscán, was to replace the phrase “she recovered it all so legitimately and in such a way” with “she showed such great dexterity and had such good sense

102 Pulgar, *Crónica*, c. 125, 1:455, cited in note 87 above.

103 “Obligato non son io disse il Conte ad insegnarui à diuentar aggratiati, ne altro, ma solamente à dimostrarui qual’habbia ad essere un perfetto Cortegiano. [...] [I]o forse ui saprò dir qual’habbia ad esser’un perfetto Cortegiano, ma non insegnarui come habbiате à fare per diuenirne” (Baldassare Castiglione, *Il libro del cortegiano* [Venice: 1528], fol. b3v).

104 “nō è stato à tempi nostri, al mondo piu chiaro exempio di uera bonta, di grandezza d’animo, di prudentia, di religione, d’honestà, di cortesia, di liberalità, in somma d’ogni uirtù, che la Regina Isabella” (Castiglione, *Il cortegiano*, fol. k4r).

105 “quando essa uenne à regnare, trouò la maggior parte di Castiglia occupata da grandi: nientedimento il tutto ricuperò così giustifcatamente, & con tal modo che i medesimi, che ne furono priuati, le restarono affectionatissimi, & contenti di lasciar quello che possedeuano” (Castiglione, *Il cortegiano*, fol. k4r).

in recovering it all so justly.”¹⁰⁶ The noun *maña*, used by Boscán to synthesize Isabel’s political genius, derives from the Latin word for “hand” (*manus*) and bore less-than-principled connotations in Castilian speech of the time. For, in addition to *dexterity*, as I translate it, it also signified manipulation, sleight of hand and artifice or deception.¹⁰⁷ Nevertheless, we should not interpret this term as a reproach or as evidence of Isabel’s falsity. To the contrary, it reflects Boscán’s admiration for Isabel’s skill in shaping her own image and, with this, the course of her reign. From today’s perspective, it is similarly evident that the rhetoric that Isabel used to bend others to her will continues to influence how she is remembered. For, in both cases, a pious *persona* commands the utmost respect.

106 “quando ella començo / a / reynar hallo la mayor parte de Castilla en poder delos grandes: Pero ella se dio tan buena maña / y / tuuo tal seso en cobrallo todo tan iustamente / que los mismos despojados delos estados que se auian vsurpado / y tenian ya por suyos / le quedaron affiçionados en todo estremo / y / muy contentos de dexar lo que posseyan” (Baldassare Castiglione, *Los quatro libros del cortesano: Compuestos en italiano por el conde / Balthasar / castellon / y / agora nueuamente traduzidos en lengua castellana por Boscán* [Barcelona: 1534], fol. 73r).

107 “MAÑA, vale destreza, y dixose a manu, por ser la mano el instrumẽto de los instrumentos. Dizese tener vno maña para haer alguna cosa, quando la haze con destreza y liberalidad: y a este llamamos mañoso. En otra significaciõ maña vale ardid, astucia, y engaño” (Sebastián de Covarrubias Horozco, *Tesoro de la lengva castellana, o española* [Madrid: 1611], fol. 536v).

The Learning of Ladies at the Isabelline Court

Elizabeth Teresa Howe

The foundation for the education of women at the Isabelline court was laid by a number of theorists in the Iberian Peninsula even before Isabel was born. As participants in the *querelle des femmes*, some of these writers advocated in favor of women's education as a counter-argument to the misogynists who derided the very idea in their works. Members of the latter camp questioned whether women had sufficient intelligence to profit from intellectual pursuits.¹ Among them was Alfonso Martínez de Toledo, Arcipreste de Talavera, who, in *El Corbacho*, averred that women's "fragility of understanding" was an impediment to learning. In contrast, in his paean to "virtuous and illustrious women," Álvaro de Luna countered by arguing that no real difference existed between "the intellectual capacity of a man and that of a woman."² The *Triunfo de las donas* by Rodríguez de Padrón joined in the controversy when it defended women against the misogyny apparent in the Arcipreste's work.³ In a similar vein, a 15th-century treatise by Rodrigo de Zamora represented one of the earliest examples of educational theory written in Spain that drew on the new learning of humanist writers.⁴

These authors wrote at a time that coincided with the appearance in the 15th and the 16th centuries of educated (and, indeed, literate) women not only in Spain but in Renaissance Europe as well.⁵ Among them were Christine de Pisan in France, Laura Cereta in Italy, and the Mendozas in Spain. As will be clear, some of these women and their accomplishments influenced Isabel both

1 See María del Pilar Rábade Obradó, "El arquetipo femenino en los debates intelectuales del siglo xv castellano," *En la España Medieval* 11 (1 January 1998): 261–301, at 286.

2 Quoted in Rábade Obradó, "El arquetipo," 287. English translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.

3 See Julio Vélez-Sainz, "Estudios desvedados: Trazos de la *querelle* en los tratados de instrucción femenina," Chapter VIII of *La defensa de la mujer* (Madrid: 2015), 221–47, for analysis of these and other pertinent treatises current in 15th- and 16th-century Spain.

4 L.I. Keniston, "A Fifteenth-Century Treatise on Education by Bishop Rodericus Zamoriensis," *Bulletin Hispanique* 32.3 (1930): 193–217, at 199–200.

5 See María del Mar Graña Cid, "Mujeres perfectas, mujeres sabias: Educación, identidad y memoria (Castilla, Siglos xv–xvi)," in *De leer a escribir*, vol. 1: *La educación de las mujeres: ¿Libertad o subordinación?*, ed. Cristina Segura Graiño (Madrid: 1996), 123–54, at 123.

directly and indirectly. Although humanist writers did not focus exclusively on the issue of women's capacity to learn, the moral arguments they presented anticipated those advanced by later writers such as Fray Martín de Córdoba in his *Jardín de nobles doncellas* (1468), proffered to Isabel as guidance in her future duties as queen, and Juan Luis Vives in his *Instrucción de la mujer cristiana* (1528), dedicated to her daughter, Catherine of Aragon.⁶ According to Bethany Aram, Fray Martín dedicated his *Jardín* to Isabel "after her brother's death (July 1468) and before her marriage (October 1469), seeking to inspire her to study in order eventually to rule."⁷ In addition to these works, the anonymous *Carro de las donas* represented one of the "most published and read educational treatises that marks a milestone in the theory of feminine education in Castile."⁸ Over time, many of these works found their way into Isabel's library.⁹

Actual instruction of the *infanta* Isabel and her brother Alfonso began in Arévalo in the household of her mother, the dowager queen. Under the terms of his will, Isabel's father, the late Juan II of Castile, stipulated that the young *infantes* should be subject to the tutelage of their mother.¹⁰ In addition to the queen, their grandmother and a tutor, Gonzalo de Chacón, supervised the early studies of both Alfonso and Isabel.¹¹ In Isabel's case, she found herself surrounded by the pious women who formed the widowed queen's court. Consequently, some of her studies included not only acts of devotion but also

6 Cristina Guardiola-Griffiths claims that "Isabel as the spiritual fountainhead for the country's well-being takes root in the *Jardín* and branches out in many moral and religious treatises dedicated to the queen" (Cristina Guardiola-Griffiths, *Legitimizing the Queen: Propaganda and Ideology in the Reign of Isabel I of Castile* [Lewisburg, PA: 2011], 28). She goes on to observe that "fray Martín concedes the necessity of educating the less than ideal woman" (33). Similarly, Rábade Obradó asserts that both Fray Luis de León and Juan Luis Vives present Isabel as a mirror in which women might observe and imitate her virtues (Rábade Obradó, "El arquetipo," 300).

7 Bethany Aram, *Juana the Mad: Sovereignty and Dynasty in Renaissance Europe* (Baltimore: 2005), 17.

8 "[T]ratados educativos más difundidos y leídos [que] marcan un hito en la teoría de la educación femenina en Castilla," cited in Graña Cid, "Mujeres perfectas," 124.

9 See Diego Clemencín, "Estudios y colecciones de la Reina Católica" in "Elogio de la Reina Católica: Doña Isabel al que siguen varias ilustraciones sobre su reinado," *Memorias de la Academia de la Historia* 6 (1821): 9–88, where he lists the contents of her library.

10 "Testamento de Juan II de Castilla en Valladolid a 8 de julio 1454," in *Memorias de Enrique IV*, 2:118, cited in Vicente Rodríguez Valencia, *Isabel la Católica en la opinión de españoles y extranjeros: Siglos XV al XX*, tomo 1: *Siglos XV al XVI* (Valladolid: 1970), 8.

11 See Cristina Segura Graiño, "Influencias de Portugal en la educación y formación de Isabel I de Castilla," in *Isabel la Católica y su época*, ed. Luis Ribot et al. (Actas del Congreso Internacional, 2004), 2 vols (Valladolid: 2007), 1:319–33, at 331.

the traditional domestic lessons taught to girls such as embroidery, spinning, weaving, and rudimentary medicine. By the age of seven, she began to receive more formal instruction from tutors. The focus of these early studies was Christian doctrine, probably utilizing the *Breve doctrina y enseñanza que ha de saber y de poner en obra todo christiano y christiana* of Hernando de Talavera. Later, in the household of her half brother Enrique IV, she learned courtly skills in music, song, and art. She also gained some notions of governance, although Enrique's principal interest was the preparation of Alfonso for that role.¹² Most of these studies constituted a curriculum designed for any young noblewomen who would one day oversee a large household.

Besides the domestic focus of her earliest instruction, Isabel learned to read and write in Castilian, Catalan, and Portuguese (her mother's tongue). At the same time, she demonstrated some command of French and Latin.¹³ Similarly, she studied basic arithmetic and calligraphy, although her handwriting suggested insufficient instruction.¹⁴ More importantly, great emphasis was placed on her moral upbringing, so much so that Castiglione extolled her in fulsome terms, claiming that "there has not been in our time in the whole world a brighter example of true goodness, greatness of spirit, wisdom, religion, honor, courtesy, liberality, and every virtue, in short, than this Queen Isabel."¹⁵ Since both queens and noblewomen were expected to serve as examples of moral

12 See Nicasio Salvador Miguel, "La instrucción de Isabel la Católica: Los años cruciales, (1451–1467)," *Arbor* 701 (2004): 107–28, at 112–15; see 121–22 for more on her education at court. He also mentions her exposure to poetry and political literature. See also Segura Graiño, "Influencias," 324; and Rábade Obradó, "El arquetipo," 298 on Isabel's education in governance.

13 See Ian Michael, "From Her Shall Read the Perfect Ways of Honour: Isabel of Castile and Chivalric Romance," in *The Age of the Catholic Monarchs, 1471–1516: Literary Studies in Memory of Keith Whinnom*, ed. Alan Deyermond and Ian Macpherson (Liverpool: 1989), 103–112, at 109, where Michael makes these observations.

14 Gabriella Airaldi and Consuelo Varela, *Isabella di Castiglia: Una ferrea vocazione al potere* (Genova: 1992), 56.

15 "No ha habido en nuestros tiempos en el mundo más claro ejemplo de verdadera bondad, de grandeza de ánimo, de prudencia de religión, de honestidad, de cortesía, de liberalidad y de toda virtud, en fin, que esta reina Isabel" (cited by Ramón Menéndez Pidal, *Los Reyes Católicos y otros estudios* [Buenos Aires: 1962], 63; translated by Frances M. López-Morillas in *Spain in the Fifteenth Century: 1369–1516*, ed. Roger Highfield [London: 1972], 419). In the *Continuación de la Crónica de Pulgar por un autor anónimo* her virtues are enumerated, as noted in Rodríguez Valencia, *Isabel la Católica*, 1:92–93. See also Salvador Miguel, "La instrucción" and Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada, "Isabel la Católica vista por sus contemporáneos," *En la España Medieval* 29 (2006): 225–86, at 235.

rectitude to their subjects, much of the *infanta's* reading consisted of devotional texts, reflecting the religiosity of her mother's retinue.¹⁶

For the most part, the young princess was surrounded by adults in her mother's household, with the notable exception of Beatriz de Bobadilla, only 11 years her senior. Alonso de Palencia explains that "from her youth [Isabel] had loved Beatriz very much, distinguishing her with her intimacy from the other companions of her childhood games."¹⁷ Although Beatriz left Arévalo after her marriage to Andrés de Cabrera, who served Enrique IV as a courtier, she maintained a relationship with the future queen. Initially, she attempted to convince Isabel to accept the Marqués de Villena, Juan Pacheco, as a husband instead of Fernando de Aragón.¹⁸ She eventually changed her opinion, however, and intervened on behalf of the young couple with Enrique. In a work attributed to Juan de Flores, the author of the *Crónica incompleta* described Beatriz as "a very discreet woman of all those known in Spain [and] the most gallant lady whom Christianity had in our times."¹⁹ Also recognizing Beatriz's "masculine" courage, the humanist Pedro Mártir de Anglería, who served at Isabel's court, admitted that she "manifested a virile spirit in peace and in war and by means of her advice great things were accomplished in the kingdom."²⁰

16 Rábade Obradó, "El arquetipo," 296; Segura Graiño, "Influencias," 330.

17 "[D]esde niña [Isabel] había querido mucho a Beatriz, distinguiéndola con su intimidad entre las demás compañeras de juegos infantiles" (cited in María del Pilar Rábade Obradó, "Leonor López de Córdoba y Beatriz de Bobadilla: Dos consejeras para dos reinas. Una aproximación comparativa," *e-Spania: Revue interdisciplinaire d'études médiévales et modernes* 12 [décembre 2011], n.p.). Salvador Miguel questions the presence of Beatriz and her husband in Arévalo ("La instrucción," 111–12).

18 Rábade Obradó, "Leonor López," 10. Elizabeth A. Leffeldt claims to find in Christine de Pisan's works "resonances of Flores's description of Beatriz de Bobadilla, who ruled quietly and successfully in her husband's stead and attempted to keep the peace between Henry and Isabella" (Elizabeth A. Leffeldt, "The Gender of Shared Sovereignty: Texts and the Royal Marriage of Isabella and Ferdinand," in *Women, Texts and Authority in the Early Modern Spanish World*, ed. María V. Vicente and Luis R. Corteguera [Aldershot: 2003], 37–55, at 50).

19 "[M]uger muy discreta de las que más en España sabían" and "la más galana dama que ovo en sus tiempos en la cristiandad" (in Juan de Flores, *Crónica incompleta de los Reyes Católicos* [1469–1476]. *Según un manuscrito anónimo de la época*, ed. Julio Puyol [Madrid: 1934], Título VII, 111–12). Michael Gerli attributes authorship of the *Crónica* to Juan de Flores (Michael Gerli, "Gender Trouble: Juan de Flores's *Triunfo de Amor*, Isabel la Católica, and the Economies of Power at Court," *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* 4.2 [2003]: 169–84, at 170).

20 "[M]ostró ánimo viril en la paz y en la guerra y por su consejo se hicieron en el Reyno cosas muy esclarecidas" (quoted in Rábade Obradó, "Leonor López de Córdoba," 2). The author also quotes Pulgar, who asserts that Beatriz "was one of the 'ladies and noble girls who were in continuous service in her chamber'" ("[E]ra una de las 'damas e doncellas

Thus, she effectively embodied the very qualities of the *mujer varonil* (manly woman) later ascribed to Isabel herself.

Beatriz manifests her daring in a letter penned to Enrique and reproduced in the aforesaid *Crónica*. In it she accuses him of “such inhuman cruelty [because he] has considered stripping [his] siblings of property that is rightfully theirs [and] disinheriting [his] sister, the princess, who has always been obedient in [his] service and whom [he has] raised since her childhood.” She concludes by requesting that the king receive the pair and embrace them.²¹ In his reply, the king admits to Beatriz: “as you have said, I recognize that through my faults, it has come about”; that is, that his actions have contributed to the divisions within his kingdom.²²

Fernando and Isabel rewarded Beatriz for the part she played in the acceptance of their marriage. After their ascension to the throne, they bestowed honors on her and her husband.²³ Nevertheless, the queen also reclaimed royal rents from Beatriz and Don Andrés along with other supporters of her cause, demonstrating thereby her even-handed justice.²⁴ Still, in her vigorous defense of the future *Reyes Católicos* as well as her management of her husband's affairs when he was quite ill, Beatriz displayed those qualities of administration that usually accrued to men rather than women.²⁵ She effectively served as a co-equal in her marriage, an example later also true of Isabel's union with Fernando. In fact, her fame was such that it exceeded that of her husband, so much so that Cabrera came to be referred to as “the husband of lady Beatriz, Marchioness of Moya,” and only later identified as ‘Marquis of

fijasdalgo que estavan en el continuo servicio de su cámara” [*Crónica de los Reyes Católicos*, ed. Juan de M. Carriazo (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Españoles, 1943) 2.418] [quoted in Rábade Obradó, “Leonor López de Córdoba,” 12]. Airaldi and Varela suggest that “it was possible that Beatriz accompanied the queen and furthermore participated with her in many episodes during the war with Granada” (“era possibile Beatrice accompagnava la regina e partecipava inoltre con essa a molti episodi della guerra di Granada”) (Airaldi and Varela, *Isabella*, 84).

21 “[C]rueldad tan inhumanamente [porque] ha pensado despojar a vuestros hermanos de Reyno que tan justamente les es devido ... y desheredar a la princesa vuestra hermana, que tan obediente ha estado siempre en vuestro servicio y desde su niñez aveys criado” (Flores, *Crónica incompleta*, 116–18).

22 “[A]si como lo aueys dicho, los conosco por mis pecados aver venido” (Flores, *Crónica incompleta*, 118, 121).

23 Rábade Obradó, “Leonor López,” 12.

24 See Menéndez Pidal, *Los Reyes Católicos*, 63, who cites Castiglione on this point as well. See also Highfield (ed.), *Spain in the Fifteenth Century*, 419, for a translation.

25 Barbara F. Weissberger, *Isabel Rules: Constructing Queenship, Wielding Power* (Minneapolis: 2004), 166.

Moya, commander and principal steward,' as if being the husband of Beatriz was actually his most important title."²⁶ Thus, beyond the familiar lessons that marked Isabel's early education, the future queen found in Beatriz de Bobadilla an example of the strong woman unafraid to speak truth to power along with the commensurate daring to ride beside her into battle. In fact, Beatriz was wounded by a Muslim while she and the queen were in Málaga, the would-be assassin mistaking her for the queen.²⁷

While attempting to consolidate power in Spain and to complete the conquest of Granada, Isabel still managed to see to the education of her children and those of noblewomen in her care within the court. A contemporary, Juan del Encina, described her court poetically as "una escuela excelente / de criança y cortesía / y es un bivar diligente / y un saber que al mas prudente / da mayor soberanía."²⁸ To clarify, Salvador Miguel explains:

[A]s to the queen's court, one should understand the collection of people who move in her circle for permanent reasons, as occurs with the political and administrative bureaucracy that weighs it down, [and] for isolated reasons such as happen with those who gather because of some particular displacements or who attach themselves to it during its stay in a particular town.²⁹

26 Andrés Bernáldez "alude a Andrés [de Cabrera] como 'el marido de la señora de Moya,' y sólo a continuación le identifica como 'marqués de Moya, comendador e mayordomo mayor,' como si ser el marido de Beatriz fuese en realidad, su título más valioso" (quoted in Rábade Obradó, "Leonor López," 9).

27 Airaldi and Varela make this assertion in *Isabella*, 84. Gerli claims that "contemporary texts ... at times sought to portray the queen in a virile role, underscoring her conduct as a woman who in the rehearsal of her authority possessed the emotions, strength, moral qualities and agency commonly associated with men" – all lessons she probably learned from Beatriz (Gerli, "Gender Trouble," 175). See also Lehfelt, who suggests that the anonymous text, *La poncella de Francia* "offers the queen the life and triumphs of Joan of Arc as a didactic model." She goes on to discuss "echoes of [Juan de] Flores's depiction of Isabel's self-fashioning at Tordesillas" in the work (Lehfelt, "The Gender," 50).

28 "[A]n excellent school / of civility and courtliness / and it is a diligent life / and a knowledge that to the most prudent / gives greater sovereignty" (quoted in María Isabel del Val Valdivieso, "La educación en la corte de la Reina Católica," *Miscelánea Comillas: Revista de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales* 69.134 [2011]: 255–73, at 255). She goes on to describe the educational advances of the court.

29 "[Por] corte de la Reina debe entenderse el conjunto de personas que se mueven en su entorno bien de manera oficial y permanente, como ocurre con la maquinaria política y administrativa que arrastra, bien de manera esporádica, como sucede con aquellos que se agregan en algunos desplazamientos concretos o se le unen durante su estadía en una villa determinada" (Nicasio Salvador Miguel, "La actividad literaria en la corte de Isabel la Católica," in *Isabel la Católica: Los libros de la Reina* [Burgos: 2004], 171–96, at 171).

As was the case with most women's sphere of influence of the time, the domain of the queen's authority was her household (*casa*).³⁰ But, as Salvador Miguel also points out, this was not a fixed site but, rather, a moveable entity surrounding the queen in her many travels. Within its virtual walls, Isabel governed over all who resided or served there. Thus, not unlike the cloistered space of a monastery of nuns, the Isabelline court was a place of exclusively female authority.³¹

Exercise of that authority is manifest in the queen's attention to learning within her household, lessons that she gained from her father. J.N.H. Lawrence describes Juan II's reign as "the turning point, the period when accelerating literacy achieved the momentum to pivot Castilian culture around and set it facing the new direction which leads to the modern world." In short, the ground had been prepared for Isabel's own efforts in advancing learning during her reign.³² Thus, in her choice of women in her retinue, Isabel picked those who were "bound to her by ties of service and friendship" and who combined skills in the domestic arts as well as shared cultural pursuits.³³ For their efforts they were rewarded with annuities drawn from the royal coffers.³⁴ Further

30 See M.E. Lacarra, who explains more fully the feminine realm in Medieval Europe (M.E. Lacarra, "Notes on Feminist Analysis of Medieval Spanish Literature and History," *La Corónica* 17.1 [1988]: 14–22, at 17). See also Theresa M. Vann, "The Theory and Practice of Medieval Castilian Queenship," in *Queens, Regents and Potentates*, ed. T.M. Vann (Dallas: 1993), 132, which describes the household of a royal predecessor, Violante de Aragón.

31 A. Muñoz Fernández observes: "the Household of the queen presents itself as a center in which women's concerns gained recognition and a stable institutional form. Where feminine authority and influence seem to manifest themselves as the norm" ("[L]a Casa de la reina se nos presenta como un medio en el que las relaciones de mujeres alcanzan reconocimiento y forma institucional estables. Donde la autoridad e influencia femenina parecen mostrarse con normalidad") (A. Muñoz Fernández, "Relaciones femeninas y activación de los mecanismos del privilegio y la merced. La casa de Isabel I de Castilla," in *Las mujeres y el poder: Representaciones y prácticas de vida*, ed. A. Cerrada and C. Segura Graiño [Madrid: 2000], 115–33, at 127). See also Graña Cid, "Mujeres perfectas," 139.

32 J.N.H. Lawrence, "The Spread of Lay Literacy in Late Medieval Castile," *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 62 (1985): 79–94, at 86. For more on Isabel's court, see Jean Hippolyte Mariejol, *The Spain of Ferdinand and Isabella*, trans. and ed. Benjamin Keen (New Brunswick, NJ: 1961), 308. See also Fernán Pérez de Guzmán, *Generaciones y semblanzas*, ed. R.B. Tate (London: 1965), 39, for a summary of the king's interests.

33 Theresa M. Earenfight, "Raising Infanta Catalina de Aragón to be Catherine, Queen of England," *Anuario de estudios medievales* 46.1 (2016): 417–33, at 423.

34 Earenfight, "Raising," 425. At the same time, the author identifies a number of these women, as does Val Valdivieso, "La educación," 264, note 28; 271.

indication of the queen's control and commitment to education within her retinue is evidenced in payments to those employed for that purpose.³⁵

Anxious to offer her children a better education than she had received, Isabel arranged for the employment of humanist scholars from Spain and Italy to offer instruction not only to the *infantes*, but to the offspring of the nobility residing in the court.³⁶ The aforementioned Pedro Mártir de Anglería wrote to the queen in 1488 acknowledging his acceptance of the post of tutor wherein "he might take charge of the literary instruction of those youngsters of the court who come from the families of Grandees."³⁷ Instruction was not limited to boys, however, as Marineo Sículo observes in his *De rebus Hispaniae memorabilibus* when he states that the queen "educated at her own expense a large number of young noblewomen, diligently attending to their care; later she procured an honorable parting and provided splendidly for their marriage dowry, principally for the most virtuous and recollected."³⁸ In addition to intellectual

35 See Val Valdivieso, "La educación," 256, which references the accounts of Gonzalo de Baeza.

36 Val Valdivieso describes "una educación particular" within the court that included both men and women ("La educación," 257). See Michael for this assertion and the example of the Infante Don Juan de Aragón's education (Michael, "From Her," 109). Peggy Liss points out that Juan was taught by "his father's trusted counselor, the bishop Pablo de Santa María, who was *Canciller mayor* of the realm" until the prince was fourteen (Peggy Liss, "Isabel of Castile [1451–1504], Her Self-Representation and Its Context," in *Queenship and Political Power in Medieval and Early Modern Spain*, ed. Theresa Earenfight [Hampshire, England: 2005], 120–44, at 129). After that, Juan's tutor was the bishop of Burgos. Muñoz Fernández names Marineo Sículo, the Geraldini brothers, Pedro Mártir de Anglería, Beatriz Galindo, and Antonio Nebrija as scholars who had a hand in education within the court (Muñoz Fernández, "Relaciones femeninas," 116–17).

37 "[L]e hiciere cargo de la instrucción literaria de estos jóvenes de la corte pertenecientes a las familias de los Grandes" (Epístola XIII, fol. IIII, Año 1488, "A la Reina," quoted in Rodríguez Valencia, *Isabel la Católica*, 1:176). In another letter addressed "Al Arzobispo de Braga y al Obispo de Pamplona," he complains about the difficulty of teaching "all day [in] the house full of boisterous young noblemen, given over to frivolous pursuits, who – as you well know – were accustomed [to doing so] from their childhood" ("[T]odo el día la casa llena de bulliciosos jóvenes de la nobleza, que dando de mano a los frívolos devaneos a los que – como muy bien sabéis – estaban acostumbrados desde pequeños") (from *Opus Epistolarum* [Amsterdam: 1670], in Vatican Library R. G. Storia, 1:183; cited in Rodríguez Valencia, *Isabel la Católica*, 1:179).

38 "[E]ducaba a sus expensas a gran número de jóvenes hijas de los Nobles, atendiendo con solicitud a su custodia; después las procuraba un honorable partido y proveía con esplendidez a su dote matrimonial, principalmente a las más honestas y recogidas" (fols 105v, 122r–122v [Alcalá: 1533], quoted in Rodríguez Valencia, *Isabel la Católica*, 1:202–03). Further comments by Jerónimo Münzer aver that "the education that their mother gives them [her daughters], with excellent teachers, makes one hope that they will be very virtuous" ("[L]a educación que les da [a sus hijas] su madre, con excelentes maestros,

pursuits, she made sure that her daughters were taught the domestic skills which she herself had mastered.³⁹ Still, she did not neglect lessons in Latin and statecraft for all of her children, realizing that not just her son but also her daughters might rule in their own right one day.⁴⁰

The queen's interest in education eventually extended beyond the instruction of her children within the court. Anticipating the need to prepare properly the presumed heir to the throne, she first employed tutors trained at the University of Salamanca and, later, arranged for the prince and his retinue to attend. Among the notable scholars employed there was Antonio de Nebrija, who envisioned the university as a veritable bastion of learning in the kingdom. His "attitude perfectly aligned with a major aim of Isabelline royal policy: to make the newly unified kingdom the intellectual leader of Europe."⁴¹

At the same time, Isabel sought to expand her own learning and that of other women within her household.⁴² To that end, she continued to study Latin as an adult in order to engage with ambassadors in the language of diplomacy.⁴³ She also prevailed upon Antonio de Nebrija to produce a bilingual

hace esperar que lleguen a ser muy virtuosas") (Jerónimo Münzer, *Itinerarium Hieronymi Monetarii*, fol. 201v, quoted in Rodríguez Valencia, *Isabel la Católica*, 1:159).

39 See Marianne Mahn-Lot, "Le mécénat d'Isabelle la Catholique," *Revue historique* 562 (1987): 289–307, at 289, for a description of the instruction of Isabel's daughters.

40 See Airaldi and Varela, *Isabella*, 60; and John Edwards, *Ferdinand and Isabella: Profiles in Power* (Harlow, England: 2005), 151, for more detail on the education of all the *infantes*. Elena Gascón Vera points out that Juana and Catherine may have been educated to govern but, in fact, "neither one of them would be permitted the autonomy or the independence to exercise her power" as their mother had (Elena Gascón Vera, "Juana I of Castile, Catherine of Aragon, and the Failure of Feminine Power in the Construction of Empire," in *Juana of Castile: History and Myth of the Mad Queen*, ed. María Gómez et al. [Lewisburg, PA: 2008], 45–57, at 48–49). She also lists the treatises designed to instill in the *infantas* a moral foundation, many of which formed part of the *querelle* debate.

41 Weissberger, *Isabel Rules*, 136–37.

42 María del Pilar Rábade Obradó, "Construcción y deconstrucción de un personaje: Beatriz Galindo frente a su mito," *Cahiers d'études hispaniques médiévales* 39.1 (2016): 165–82, at 173.

43 Ladero Quesada, "Isabel la Católica," 238. See Antonio de la Torre, "Unas noticias de Beatriz Galindo 'La Latina,'" *Hispania* 17 (1957): 255–61, at 257, for the claim that the queen began to study Latin at the beginning of the war to reconquer Granada in 1482. In contrast, Salvador Miguel maintains that "already an adult, Isabel decide[d] to submerge herself in the study of Latin [and] the foundations of her formation had been set between 1451 and 1467" ("ya bien madura, decide [Isabel] sumergirse en el estudio del latín [y] los cimientos de su formación se habían puesto entre 1451 y 1467") (Salvador Miguel, "La instrucción," 123). Weissberger questions how well Isabel mastered Latin, opining that "the praise for her abilities in Latin may have more to do with flattery than with any real level of proficiency she may have attained" (Weissberger, *Isabel Rules*, 137).

Latin-Castilian edition of his *Introductiones latinae* (ca. 1488), ostensibly for use by nuns but also helpful to other women as a textbook.⁴⁴ His *Gramática castellana*, published in 1492 and dedicated to the queen, was equally beneficial in teaching basic literacy within the kingdom.⁴⁵ Lastly, Isabel sponsored a number of works for publication that eventually found their way into the library she established at San Juan de los Reyes in Toledo. Among these were saints' lives that served as devotional texts suitable for reading by her female companions.⁴⁶

Marineo Sículo comments on the great number of "virtuous and noble women whom [Isabel] distinguished with her open and familiar manner."⁴⁷ The queen was judicious in her selection of her retinue, preferring "older aristocratic women,' or widows with young noble girls, or daughters of royal officials who were raised therein, near the queen."⁴⁸ To that end, she avoided any woman whose reputation was suspect. As noted earlier, she also arranged

44 Ronald Surtz, "The Reciprocal Construction of Isabelline Book Patronage," in *Queen Isabel I of Castile. Power, Patronage, Persona*, ed. Barbara F. Weissberger (Suffolk, Rochester: 2008), 55–70, at 60. The author also ascribes other motives to the queen's actions (Surtz, "The Reciprocal Construction," 56). Ángel Gómez Moreno considers Nebrija's work as part of "a vast cultural undertaking covered by the Catholic Kings, and particularly, by Isabel of Castile" ("una vasta empresa cultural arropada por los Reyes Católicos, y muy en particular, por Isabel de Castilla") (Ángel Gómez Moreno, *España y la Italia de los humanistas* [Madrid: 1994], 89).

45 Mahn-Lot, "Le mécénat," 294.

46 Ronald Surtz, "Female Patronage of Vernacular Religious Works in 15th-Century Castile: Aristocratic Women and Their Confessors," in *The Vernacular Spirit. Essays on Medieval Religious Literature*, ed. Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, Duncan Robertson and Nancy B. Warren (New York: 2002), 263–82, at 264. See also Lía Schwartz and Susan Byrne, "Intellectual Life," in *A Companion to the Spanish Renaissance*, ed. Hilaire Kallendorf (Leiden: 2019), 317–39, at 321; Mahn-Lot, "Le mécénat," 293–94; and María del Val Valdivieso, "Isabel la Católica y la educación," *Aragón en la Edad Media* 19 (2006): 555–62, at 558. All of these sources comment on Isabel's sponsorship of translations and publication of books. See also Muñoz Fernández, who calls attention to the variety of subjects represented in her library (Muñoz Fernández, "Relaciones," 117). Michael cautions that "it is probable that most of the nearly four hundred books in Isabel's collection were originally acquired by Juan II ... though some were perhaps added by Enrique IV, and a few may possibly have been of her own selection" (Michael, "From Her," 107–08).

47 "[D]amas virtuosas y nobles a quienes [Isabel] distinguía con un trato llano y familiar" (in *De rebus Hispaniae memorabilibus*, 1st ed., 'cum privilegio Cesareo' [Alcalá: 1533], fols 105v–122r, quoted in Vicenta María Márquez de la Plata y Ferrándiz, *Mujeres renacentistas en la corte de Isabel la Católica* [Madrid: 2005], 152, note 6).

48 "[M]ujeres ancianas de linaje' o dueñas con doncellas nobles o hijas de oficiales de la casa real que se criaban en ella, cerca de la reina" (quoted in Ladero Quesada, "Isabel la Católica," 247).

marriages and, when necessary, dowries for young noblewomen in her court.⁴⁹ One of those who benefitted from this royal largesse was Beatriz Galindo, known by the eponym 'la Latina.'

Born in Salamanca (1475) to a family associated with the university, Beatriz initially studied Latin with the intention of entering religious life. It is unlikely that she studied at the university or with Nebrija as some have claimed, but she did receive some formal instruction.⁵⁰ Eventually her reputation for command of the classical language reached the queen, who sent for the young woman.⁵¹ Her precise role in the court is not clear, however. Airaldi and Valera ascribe many different positions to Beatriz, including lady-in-waiting to the queen, keeper of the queen's wardrobe, and teacher of grammar and Latin letters.⁵² Because of her knowledge of Latin, she was numbered among the "illustrious and memorable women of letters and other virtues" mentioned by Marineo Sículo.⁵³ Purported eyewitness accounts describe her reading aloud to women

49 See Capellán de Adriano de Utrecht, "*Carro de las donas*," Lib. II, Cap. LXIII, fols XLIIIV–XLIIIV, cited in Rodríguez Valencia, *Isabel la Católica*, 1:311, for a description of the queen's interaction with these young women.

50 Rábade Obradó, "Construcción," 171–72.

51 Cited in Manuel Serrano y Sanz, *Apuntes para una biblioteca de Escritoras Españolas desde el año 1401 al 1833*, part 1, vol. 2 (Madrid: 1903), 420–21. Torre cites Fray José de Sigüenza, *Historia de la Orden de San Jerónimo*, Ch. XX, Parte 3 for the contention that Beatriz "might have known a little Latin and knew it from when she was quite small" ("supiese un poco de latín y lo supo desde 'muy pequeña'") (Torre, "Unas noticias," 257–58).

52 *Isabella di Castiglia*, 90. Márquez de la Plata y Ferrándiz states that Beatriz was both a maid (*criada*), suggestive of an intimate relationship with the monarch, and a counselor (*camarera*) to the queen (Márquez de la Plata y Ferrándiz, *Mujeres renacentistas*, 97108). Rábade Obradó disputes these claims but acknowledges that Beatriz did serve Isabel throughout the latter's life (Rábade Obradó, "Construcción," 177–78). Torre asserts that Beatriz "is never included among the ladies nor is her name preceded by the title '*Doña*' proper to them" ("nunca se le incluye entre las damas, ni va su nombre precedido por la palabra '*doña*' propio de ellas") (Torre, "Unas noticias," 260). Earlier, Torre questions the accuracy of statements made by the chroniclers, Pulgar and Marineo Sículo, regarding Galindo's role(s) in the Isabelline court (Torre, "Unas noticias," 256–59).

53 "[M]ujeres ilustres y memorables en letras y otras virtudes" (Marineo Sículo, as quoted in María-Milagros Rivera Garretas, "Las prosistas del humanismo y del Renacimiento (1400–1550)," in *Breve historia feminista de la literatura española*, vol. 4: *La literatura escrita por mujer: De la Edad Media al siglo XVIII*, ed. Iris M. Zavala and Myriam Díaz-Diocaretz [Barcelona: 1993], 83–129, at 125–26). In *Memorias de las reinas católicas*, published in 1761, well after the death of the principals, Padre Enrique Flórez also cites Marineo Sículo, who claims that "through the 'Latina's teaching [the queen] became 'Lady of the Latin language'" ("[P]or las enseñanzas de La Latina [la Reina] llegó a hacerse Señora de la Lengua Latina") (quoted in Márquez de la Plata y Ferrándiz, *Mujeres renacentistas*, 107, note 24).

and girls in some detail.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, there is no actual proof that Beatriz served as a teacher of Latin within the court.⁵⁵ Whether as *camarera* or *dama*, however, Beatriz was credited with augmenting the instruction of the queen and members of her retinue in Latin. Still, she was paid less for her labors than the male tutors at the court.⁵⁶ At the same time, she was one of the women whose marriage was arranged and dowered by Isabel.

Beatriz became the second wife of Francisco Ramírez, secretary to Fernando. Upon the death of her husband in 1501 she, in turn, endowed charitable institutions, one of which was a school for young women. In her last will and testament, she credited Isabel's example for her actions:

[All that] I have spent in the buildings and gifts to said monasteries and hospital has been because of the favors shown me by Queen Isabel, our sovereign, may she rest in peace, so that for said buildings and gifts as well as the expense of my household and my person, I retreated as much as I was able from that sale, living in strict poverty after my husband, the secretary, died.⁵⁷

Like the queen herself, Beatriz Galindo was admired by eminent writers following her death in 1534. Thus, Lope de Vega included her in his *Laurel de Apolo*, praising her thus:

As that 'Latina'
whom our view hardly determines
whether she was a woman or pure intelligence
learned and beautiful

54 María José and Pedro Voltes, et al. (eds.), *Las mujeres en la historia de España* (Barcelona: 1986), 94. The editors of this volume cite Padre Coloma; Rodríguez Valencia, *Isabel la Católica*, 1:119; and Gonzalo Fernández, "Un testimonio sobre la reina y un testimonio sobre la corte" to this effect.

55 Torre, "Unas noticias," 259–60.

56 Earenfight, "Raising *Infanta* Catalina," 426.

57 "[T]odo lo que he gastado en los edificios y dotaciones de los dichos monasterios y hospital ha sido de algunas mercedes que la reyna Doña Isabel nuestra señora, que aya santa gloria, me hizo, así para los dichos edificios y dotaciones como para el gasto de mi persona y casa, del qual gasto yo me retraxe todo lo que pude, viviendo pobre y estrechamente después que el secretario mi señor murió" (quoted in Serrano y Sanz, *Apuntes*, part 1, 2:436). Muñoz Fernández mentions other ladies influenced by Isabel's example to endow monasteries for women ("Relaciones," 129).

and holy amidst the difficulties of the Court.
 Moreover, what else would she do who has God as her guide?⁵⁸

In another work, Lope first praises her husband, Francisco Ramírez, then adds:

His dear Beatriz, his beloved prize,
 taken for a second Nicostrata
 famous will she live eternally, from generation to generation
 with the name 'Latina.'⁵⁹

Comparison of Beatriz with Nicostrata, who was celebrated in Italy as Carmenta, recalls both Christine de Pisan's *Book of the City of Ladies* as well as Fray Martín de Córdoba's *Jardín de Nobles Doncellas*, each part of the *querelle* debate. The former praised Nicostrata for her command of classical languages, as did Boccaccio in his *Concerning Famous Women*. In the *Jardín*, Fray Martín compared Isabel herself to Carmenta for reintroducing Latin letters to Spain. Thus, by association, Beatriz serves as an example drawn from antiquity yet reflecting her monarch as well.

Still, Beatriz Galindo was hardly the only woman of letters associated with the wider Isabelline court. Among those noblewomen within Isabel's orbit and cited by various scholars for a certain level of learning were Isabel de Zúñiga, the Duchess of Alba, Elvira de Sotomayor, and María de Estúñiga (or, later, Zúñiga), all of whom were the sisters of Juan de Zúñiga.⁶⁰ Although not all of

58 Como á aquella *Latina*,
 Que apenas nuestra vista determina
 Si fué mujer ó inteligencia pura;
 Docta con hermosura
 Y santa en lo difícil de la Corte.
 Más ¿qué no hará quien tiene á Dios por norte?
 (Lope de Vega, *Laurel de Apolo*, silva quinta, 98)

59 Su querida Beatriz, su prenda amada,
 Por segunda Nicostrata tenida
 Célebre vivirá, de gente en gente,
 Con nombre de *Latina* eternamente.
 (Lope de Vega, *Jerusalén conquistada*, Canto XIX, quoted in Serrano y Sanz, *Apuntes*, part 1, 2:422–23)

60 Airaldi and Varela also mention Mencía de Mendoza, daughter of the Duke of Tendilla and the Marquesa de Ceñete, who, they claim, “earned the praise of Luis Vives” (“merito gli elogi di Luis Vives”) (Airaldi and Varela, *Isabella*, 59). They may have confused this Mencía de Mendoza, the widow of the Duke of Nassau, with a later woman of the same name who was a student of Vives as well as the owner of a large library of her own. See also Earenfight, “Raising *Infanta* Catalina,” 425; Val Valdivieso, “La educación,” 264 and

these women served directly at court, each exemplified the extent of learning for her sex due to Isabel's example.

Along with Beatriz, other women of letters who were not part of the nobility are contemporaneous examples within the orbit of Queen Isabel. One is Florencia de Pinar, whom Joseph Snow asserts can "be safely placed in the late-fifteenth century at the court of Ferdinand and Isabella."⁶¹ Her poems formed part of the *Cancionero general* compiled by Hernando del Castillo.⁶² Others included Juana de Contreras, who corresponded with Marineo Sículo, as did Luisa (Lucía) Medrano. In addition, members of Luisa's family were connected to the court, most notably her sister Catalina, who served the queen as a lady-in-waiting.

In contrast to her sister, Luisa gained fame for her accomplishments at the University of Salamanca, an institution that benefitted from royal favor.⁶³ In his *Historia del mundo*, Otto von Corvin identifies Luisa as a "catedrática de Latín en Salamanca," that is, a professor of Latin. Gil González Dávila in his *Teatro eclesiástico* claims that Marineo Sículo heard Luisa lecture "en público y que era mujer de rara y admirable elocuencia (in public and she was a woman of rare and admirable eloquence). Similarly, Bernardo Dorado compared her to Beatriz Galindo, not only for her grasp of the Latin language, but also for her ability to lecture in it.⁶⁴ In another sense, she exceeded even Galindo's accomplishments for she knew Greek as well as Latin and, according to contemporary accounts, also taught rhetoric at the university.⁶⁵ She was joined in reputation

27; and Muñoz Fernández, "Relaciones femeninas," 129, which mentions other women connected with Isabel's court.

61 Joseph Snow, "The Spanish Love Poet: Florencia Pinar," in *Medieval Women Writers*, ed. Katharina M. Wilson (Athens, GA: 1984), 320–32, at 321. Alan Deyermond offers biographical data on Pinar as well as a brief analysis of some of her poems (Alan Deyermond, "Spain's First Women Writers," in *Women in Hispanic Literature. Icons and Fallen Idols*, ed. Beth Miller [Berkeley: 1983], 44–52). See also Gregory B. Kaplan, "Pinar, Florencia (late fifteenth century?)," in *The Feminist Encyclopedia of Spanish Literature*, vol. 2, ed. Janet Pérez and Maureen Ihrle (Westport, CN: 2002), 479–481, for more biographical information.

62 See Deyermond, "Spain's First Women Writers"; and Wilson (ed.), *Medieval Women Writers*, 27–52, for examples of Pinar's poetry. See also Serrano y Sanz, *Apuntes*, 2.i.129–130, for additional selections of her poetry.

63 See Val Valdivieso, "Isabel la Católica y la educación," 561. This scholar also mentions Leonor de Sotomayor and María Pacheco.

64 Each of these references is cited in Márquez de la Plata y Ferrándiz, *Mujeres renacentistas*, 156 and 158, respectively. See also Rivera Garretas, who mentions Francisca (Riveras Garretas, "Las prosistas," 129. Aubrey F.G. Bell recalls yet more women known for their grasp of classical languages (Aubrey Bell, *El Renacimiento español*, trans. Eduardo Juliá Martínez [Zaragoza: 1944], 50).

65 Márquez de la Plata y Ferrándiz, *Mujeres renacentistas*, 146; 158.

by Francisca de Nebrija, daughter of Antonio de Nebrija, whom Von Corvin also recognized as a “catedrática de retórica en [la Universidad de] Alcalá.”⁶⁶

In a letter to Luisa, Marineo Sículo offered her fulsome praise: “[It is] a marvel that a young woman, almost a girl, can manage with such diligence and eagerness, not wool but the book; not the spindle but the pen; not the needle but the stylus.”⁶⁷ The rector at Salamanca joined him in lauding her eloquence.⁶⁸ Unlike the queen (who esteemed both needle and pen), however, Luisa is valued more for her erudition than for her domestic abilities.

Isabel’s influence and example stretched well beyond the borders of Spain with the marriages of her daughters to other royal houses. The chaplain of Adriano de Utrecht praised them as “very Christian and great princesses as examples of devout and holy ladies,” carrying on their mother’s reputation as chaste and devout.⁶⁹ The queen’s namesake, Isabel de Aragón, married king Manuel I of Portugal. When she died unexpectedly, her sister María took her place as queen to Manuel.

Juana wed Philip of Habsburg and joined his court in the Low Countries until the death of her mother. Juana’s education both reflected and went beyond that of her mother’s. She was introduced to texts intended to prepare for her anticipated royal duties as well as the governance of her household.⁷⁰ Specific studies included music and Latin, taught to her by her first tutors, Doctor Andrés de Miranda and, probably, Beatriz Galindo.⁷¹ In fact, Juana’s grasp of Latin even impressed the German humanist, Jerome Münzer.⁷² At the same time, emphasis was placed on her conduct within the court. Still, in arranging her marriage to Philip, Isabel and Fernando expected her to “serve the corporate interest of her parents’ realms.”⁷³

66 Rivera Garretas, “Las prosistas,” 129.

67 “[M]aravilla que una joven, casi niña, maneje con tanta diligencia y afán, no la lana sino el libro; no el huso, sino la pluma; no la aguja, sino el estilo” (*Epistolarum familiarum*, lib. XIII, epístola 82 [n.p.: n.d.], quoted in Marí Dolores Gómez Molleda, “La cultura femenina en la época de Isabel la Católica,” *Revista de archivos, bibliotecas y museos* 16 [1955]: 137–94, at 187). For more on the life and achievements of Medrano, see Thérèse Oettel, “Una catedrática en el siglo de Isabel la Católica, Luisa (Lucía) Medrano,” *Boletín de la Academia de la Historia* 107 (1935): 289–360.

68 Rivera Garretas, “Las prosistas,” 126–27.

69 “[C]hristianissimas y grandes princessas para exemplo de las deuotas y sanctas señoras” (quoted in Rodríguez Valencia, *Isabel la Católica*, 1:312–13).

70 Aram mentions some of the books she read and/or owned (Aram, *Juana the Mad*, 16; 23–27).

71 Aram, *Juana the Mad*, 24–25.

72 Mahn-Lot, “Le mécénat,” 290.

73 Aram, *Juana the Mad*, 22–23.

Catherine of Aragon was first betrothed to Prince Arthur of England, then married his brother Henry VIII after the untimely death of the heir to the Tudor throne.⁷⁴ She had received an equally rigorous education in Isabel's court, one that embraced the study of philosophy, literature, and religion as well as music. Her mastery of languages included French, English, German, Castilian, and Latin. Beatriz Galindo went so far as to claim that Catherine "surpassed her mother in Latin learning."⁷⁵ Upon her arrival in England, both Erasmus and Thomas More praised Catherine for her learning, especially her command of Latin.⁷⁶

Although each of these princesses was educated in the expectation of ruling, as had their mother, this was not to be the case. Elena Gascón Vera describes Juana and Catherine as "casualties of power in the new project of empire undertaken by their father Ferdinand, a project based upon the establishment of monarchical absolutism and its inherent hegemony of patriarchy."⁷⁷ Ironically, the four daughters admired by Juan Luis Vives for their "muy buenas letras" (learned education) and their virtues are cited in his *Instrucción de la mujer cristiana*, dedicated to Catherine for the instruction of her daughter Mary Tudor, yet another future queen.⁷⁸

Like her mother before her, María de Aragón saw to the education of her eight children within the Portuguese court. Interestingly, one of the companions to her daughter María was a young Spanish woman of extensive learning. Luisa Sigea (1530?-1560?) was born in the province of Toledo to Diego Sigeo, a French-born scholar who attended the University of Alcalá de Henares, and Doña Francisca de Velasco. Diego studied under Antonio Nebrija before taking up a post at the Portuguese court. Influenced in part by the humanist sensibilities of Nebrija – and, presumably, by the example of Isabel and Francisca de Nebrija – he instructed all of his children, including his daughters, utilizing a

74 See Earenfight, "Raising *Infanta* Catalina," 419, who indicates her ties to the English monarchy.

75 Theresa Earenfight, "Regarding Catherine of Aragon," in *Scholars and Poets Talk about Queens*, ed. Carole Levin and Christine Sewaert-Núñez (Basingstoke, England: 2015), 137–57, at 141.

76 See Guillermo Fraile, *Historia de la filosofía Española: Desde la época romana hasta fines del siglo XVII* (Madrid: 1971), 1:214; and J. Morán Samaniego, *El humanismo español desde Juan II hasta los Reyes Católicos* (Cuenca: 1953), 37, for the impressions of these two humanists.

77 Elena Gascón Vera, "Juana I," 47.

78 See Juan Luis Vives, *Instrucción de la mujer cristiana*, trans. Juan Justiniano, ed. Elizabeth Teresa Howe (Madrid: 1995), 53–54; and *The Education of a Christian Woman*, ed. and trans. Charles Fantazzi (Chicago: 2000), 70. For more on Catherine's fate see also Gascón Vera, "Juana I," 54.

classical curriculum. Luisa evinced exceptional abilities in learning languages, including Greek, Latin, and Hebrew.⁷⁹ Later, under the tutelage of other scholars, she also learned Syriac and Arabic. Like Beatriz Galindo before her, Luisa attained fame for her scholarly achievements to the extent that she, too, was ensconced at the Portuguese court as a *moça de camara* (lady-in-waiting) to the queen, and later as part of the entourage of the Princess María.⁸⁰ She was also an author whose *Duarum virginum colloquium* demonstrated her command of Latin as well as the classical dialogue form used to explore the *beatus ille* trope.

According to Muñoz Fernández, Isabel's commitment to humanistic studies also influenced a generation of women in the years following her death.⁸¹ In addition to the queen, a number of women of the powerful Mendoza family studied the classical languages. María de Mendoza carried on an extensive correspondence in Latin with the humanist Alvar Gómez de Castro, as well as composing both poetry and letters on a variety of subjects.⁸² She also read "erudite books – Homer, Virgil, Ausonius, the church fathers, among others – which she tucked in her work basket for the hours spent spinning, embroidering, and chatting with her companions and servants."⁸³ Her interests, both domestic and literary, thus evoked the example set earlier by Isabel.

Beyond her commitment to educating the female members of her court, Isabel also represented the *mujer varonil* (manly woman) in a positive light celebrated after her death by writers such as Pérez de Moya in his *Varia historia*, where he numbers her among the "women who were noted for their heroic deeds, as much in affairs of war as in counsel and government."⁸⁴ Likewise, Castiglione celebrates her in his *Book of the Courtier*. According to Weissberger, the example of Isabel's "manliness" may even have led to the transformation of the game of chess near the end of the 15th century, wherein the queen became the dominant piece on the board.⁸⁵

79 Bell points out that Luisa was not the only Spanish woman to have mastered Greek. He also names others, including Cecilia de Morillas, the aforementioned Lucía de Medrano, Ana Cervatón, and Francisca de Mendoza (Bell, *El Renacimiento*, 50).

80 See Elizabeth Teresa Howe, *Education and Women in the Early Modern Hispanic World* (Aldershot, England: 2008), 54–56, for more on Luisa Sigea's life and writings.

81 Muñoz Fernández, "Relaciones femeninas," 116.

82 For more on her relationship with Alvar Gómez, see María del Carmen Vaquero Serrano, "Books in the Sewing Basket: María de Mendoza y de la Cerda," in *Power and Gender in Renaissance Spain: Eight Women of the Mendoza Family, 1450–1650*, ed. Helen Nader (Urbana: 2004), 95–106.

83 Vaquero Serrano, "Books," 100.

84 "[M]ujeres que se señalaron en hechos heroicos, así de cosas de guerra como de consejo y gobierno" (quoted in Graña Cid, "Mujeres perfectas," 133).

85 Weissberger, *Isabel Rules*, 153.

One final example of a woman influenced both intellectually and militarily by Isabel is that of María Pacheco, yet another member of the powerful Mendoza family. Born in Granada (1496?) to Íñigo López de Mendoza, the second Count of Tendilla, and Francisca Pacheco, she was raised by her father after the death of her mother.⁸⁶ Fray Antonio de Guevara and others called her a “woman of chaste customs and clear understanding, practiced in reading, delicate in health but strong in spirit.”⁸⁷ Her brother was a student of Pedro Mártir de Anglería, while she (like Beatriz Galindo) was familiar with the classical languages as well as mathematics, history, poetry, and Scripture.⁸⁸ According to Stephanie Fink de Backer, “she participated in a women’s literary circle that included her sister, María de Mendoza, the Countess of Monteagudo, a group influenced by an Isabelline ideal of feminine education.”⁸⁹

In addition to her intellectual pursuits, María took charge of her father’s household in his absence after her mother’s death. She was aided in these endeavors by her aunt, Mencía de Mendoza.⁹⁰ After her marriage to Juan de Padilla, she continued to govern her household while her husband was away, much in the style of the late queen. With her marriage she also became involved in the political intrigues occasioned first by the sequestration of Juana de Aragón after the death of her husband and then by the suppression and forced conversion of Muslims in Granada at the direction of Cardinal Cisneros.⁹¹ The subsequent uprising by the *comuneros* (commoners) found her husband acting as one of the leaders of the revolt against Habsburg influence in Spain.

Following her husband’s execution, María assumed leadership of the revolt, establishing her seat of power in Toledo. In doing so, she embodied the qualities of the virago exemplified by Beatriz de Bobadilla and Isabel before her. As Fink de Backer notes, María “was by no means an anomaly within the context of her day in maintaining a public voice and presence,” citing the examples of Juana de Pimentel, Queen Isabel, and Juana la Loca to support her observation.⁹²

86 Stephanie Fink de Backer, “Rebel with a Cause: The Marriage of María Pacheco and the Formation of Mendoza Identity,” in *Power and Gender*, ed. Nader, 71–92, at 72. Rivera Garretas cites Marineo’s comments about her (“Las prosistas,” 128).

87 “[S]eñora de honestas costumbres, y de entendimiento claro, ejercitada en la lectura, delicada de salud pero fuerte de espíritu” (quoted in Márquez de la Plata y Ferrándiz, *Mujeres renacentistas*, 305).

88 Márquez de la Plata y Ferrándiz, *Mujeres renacentistas*, 296; 305. The author goes on to quote Juan Luis Vives’s opinion of her in *Mujeres renacentistas*, 302.

89 Fink de Backer, “Rebel,” 72.

90 Not to be confused with Mencía de Mendoza, Countess of Nassau.

91 Fink de Backer, “Rebel,” 73.

92 Fink de Backer, “Rebel,” 83.

Unlike the queen, however, María's cause was doomed to fail. As a result, she escaped Spain for Portugal, where she supported herself by teaching Latin.⁹³

Clearly the learning of ladies within the sphere of Isabelline influence encompassed both arms and letters. The example of Beatriz de Bobadilla as a "manly woman" in her actions on behalf of Isabel, as well as her participation alongside the queen in the reconquest of Granada, produced an effect on the future monarch and her retinue. In Isabel's case, the lesson learned and transmitted to later generations was that of a woman capable of governing and administering the affairs of state as needed in the absence of her husband.⁹⁴ At the same time, Isabel embraced an interest in humanistic studies that took concrete form both within the court and outside it in the education of young women.⁹⁵ By her example, she also influenced noble book owners to imitate her in amassing personal libraries.⁹⁶ From the scholarly activities of Beatriz Galindo and other women of the court to the combination of learning and military prowess in María de Pacheco, Isabel la Católica affected a generation of women not only during her lifetime but also long after her demise.

93 Fink de Backer, "Rebel," 82.

94 Ladero Quesada, "Isabel la Católica," 286. See also Weissberger, who cites Isabel's chastising of Fernando and his soldiers for retreating from Toro during the civil war as another example of her manipulation of gender stereotypes (Weissberger, *Isabel Rules*, 167). Gerli also cites Isabel's reproach of Fernando and of the Castilian army for this action (Gerli, "Gender Trouble," 176).

95 Muñoz Fernández comments on the influence that Isabel's example exercised over women in her court ("Relaciones femeninas," 127). Rábade Obradó asserts that "Isabel no solo fue considerada como ejemplo para las demás mujeres en nuestra patria, sino también allende sus fronteras" (Isabel was not only considered an example for the rest of the women in our country but also beyond its borders) ("El arquetipo," 300).

96 Val Valdivieso, "Isabel la Católica," 558, note 121.

Isabel I of Castile and Saintly Propaganda: Interpreting the St Anne Retable in the *Capilla del Condestable*

Cristina Guardiola-Griffiths

The importance of saints' lives, especially those of female saints, cannot be overstated, especially when considering the role female saints played in the composition of instructive and doctrinal treatises in medieval Spain. Hagiographical tales can be said to comprise the lion's share of late medieval Iberian narrative; their texts served as sources for both private devotion and public entertainment. This dual reception (private, public) of devotional *oeuvre* informs the readership of literary texts and the experience of artistic works. An example of this dual reception may be found in the *Retablo de Santa Ana* (St Anne's Altarpiece), once more familiarly known as the Altar of the 11,000 Virgins (see fig. 4.1).

Situated at the entrance to the *Capilla del Condestable* (Constable of Castile Chapel) in the Burgos Cathedral, the *retablo* is part of the cultural patrimony that the Constable of Castile, Pedro Fernández de Velasco, entrusted to his wife Mencía de Mendoza.¹ Mencía de Mendoza set out to complete this altar in the final years of the 15th century during the reign of Isabel I of Castile. The doctrinal and religious themes of the altarpiece have made it an object of study. This chapter offers a plausible hypothesis as to the source and motive for its construction, a hypothesis that connects the Burgos noblewoman to the Castilian monarch and that responds to the cultural expression of female piety and political savvy during the age of the Catholic Monarchs.

The Hispano-Flemish masterpiece commissioned by Mencía de Mendoza was the subject of a 1997 article by Francisco Crosas.² This article was the first to note that books are a thematic factor in the interpretation of the altarpiece. All the saints within the altar represent Christian martyrs; all the prominent polychromatic sculptures of these Christian women hold a book. Crosas believes

1 This is not to be confused with the *Capilla de Santa Ana* also located in the Burgos Cathedral. The St Anne Chapel, also known as the *Capilla de la Concepción*, is located off the western aisle between the Golden Staircase and the chapel dedicated to Saint Thecla.

2 Francisco Crosas, "Las lecturas de doña Mencía: La iconografía del retablo de Santa Ana de la capilla del Condestable de la Catedral de Burgos," *Scriptura* 13 (1997): 207–16.



FIGURE 4.1 Saint Anne Retable, Burgos Cathedral
PHOTO COURTESY OF RAFA SÁIZ

that the altarpiece may have served as a literary nod to the pious Catholic Monarch. He ties the moral-didactic import of the religious theme to Latin (the privileged language of books) and suggests that the work may have been connected to Isabel by the language she studied while queen.³ The hypothesis is suggestive, as it underscores an image of queen and noblewoman absorbed in the pursuit of knowledge handed down by the Church. This interpretation of this altarpiece is valuable, but perhaps it fails to take into full account the agency and importance of female patronage.

Mencía de Mendoza and Isabel I of Castile are figures from the 15th century identified for their personal and political importance, their artistic and cultural patronage, and their deep religious sentiment. The import of this last factor is readily known. An example of such sincere religious belief may be seen during the conquest of Granada, in particular, after the victory at Ronda. There Isabel celebrated the triumph with religious festivities. She also participated actively in the construction of churches, which entailed the conversion and reconfiguration of mosques, the purchase of crucifixes and chalices, altarpieces, books, metalwork, statuary, embroidery, and other material art necessary for religious practice.⁴

About Mencía de Mendoza, daughter of the Marquis of Santillana and wife to the first Count of Haro, less has been written. Óscar Perea Rodríguez has produced a valuable biography in which he summarizes Mencía's life and cultural production. Mencía de Mendoza belonged to one of the most notable Castilian aristocratic families of the 15th century. Perea Rodríguez notes the circumstances of that family, Mencía's birth, her marriage prospects, her eventual marriage into the also notable Velasco family, her economic independence (and the particular troubles that this independence later caused with her son), and her architectural and artistic patronage in Burgos. Perea Rodríguez describes cordial and warm relations between Mencía de Mendoza and Isabel I of Castile; he documents numerous circumstances that proved the close relationship between the Velasco/Mendoza families and the Castilian royal house of Trastámara.⁵

Felipe Pereda adds to our understanding of the noblewoman and queen when he affirms that – barring the Castilian queen – Mencía was the most powerful woman in Castile in the latter Middle Ages. Pereda has explored the

3 On Isabel's knowledge of Latin, see Elizabeth Teresa Howe's essay in this volume.

4 Joaquín Yarza Luaces, *Los reyes católicos: Paisaje artístico de una monarquía* (Madrid: 1995), 22.

5 Óscar Perea Rodríguez, "Mito y realidad en la vida de Mencía de Mendoza, Condesa de Haro (ca. 1421–1499)," in *Damas de la casa de Mendoza. Historias, leyendas y olvidos*, ed. Esther Alegre Carvajal (Madrid: 2004), 95–130.

import of Mencía's patronage of religious and noble houses in his study of the constables of Castile. Through the construction of numerous structures, Mencía fomented the memory and renown of her family. Pereda extends the idea of *patronazgo* beyond an authority conferred upon the commission of architectural works to all "the images, the paintings as well as the sculptures, that served for its enactment."⁶ Much like the queen, Mencía was a capable patron involved in the details of artistic production and the necessary tools for its religious and propagandistic use.

Studies of female artistic agency may be found in Therese Martin's two-volume *Researching the Roles of Women as Makers of Medieval Art and Architecture*. Many of the articles in the volumes build upon Jeffrey Hamburger's analysis of female monasticism, which states that women played "active and resourceful roles" as artists, patrons, and recipients of art who helped determine how images were used in the rituals in their lives.⁷ Some studies in the past several years, specifically those of Esther Alegre Carvajal, have brought into focus the artistic agency in the art and architecture promoted by Mencía de Mendoza.⁸ Mencía was a central figure to Burgos's aristocracy; Carvajal's writings note how this educated noblewoman worked within an aristocratic class that sought to distinguish itself within urban structures in the city and promote an image of aristocratic power that clearly showed the importance of the noble class.⁹

The last of Mencía's architectural projects, the funerary chapel named the *Capilla de la Purificación de la Virgen* (Chapel of the Purification of the Virgin) but better known as the *Capilla del Condestable*, was begun by Pedro Fernández de Velasco, Mencía's husband, before his role in the Granada conquest forced it into the hands of his more-than-capable wife. Funerary chapels such as the *Capilla del Condestable* or the *Cartuja de Miraflores* (Miraflores Charterhouse) pay homage to one's ancestors as much as they promote the power and renown

6 "las imágenes, a las pinturas como lo mismo que a las esculturas, que servían para su dramatización" (Felipe Pereda, "Mencía de Mendoza [†1500], mujer del I Condestable de Castilla," in *Patronos y coleccionistas: Los Condestables de Castilla y el Arte* [Valladolid: 2005], 11–119, at p. 15). All translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.

7 Therese Martin, *Researching the Roles of Women as Makers of Medieval Art and Architecture*, 2 vols (Leiden: 2012), 18.

8 Esther Alegre Carvajal, "Prestigio, ciudad y territorio: El papel de Berlanga de Duero dentro de la estructura de poder de los Velasco, Duques de Frías," *Tiempos Modernos* 6.18 (2009): 1–21, and "Utopía y realidad: Mujeres Mendoza constructoras de la ciudad renacentista," in *Retrato de la mujer renacentista*, ed. Amparo Serrano de Haro Soriano and Esther Alegre Carvajal (Madrid: 2012), 45–65.

9 Carvajal, "Prestigio, ciudad, y territorio," 4.

of the deceased member's family.¹⁰ The focus of this chapter lies, physically speaking, to the left as one enters the Burgos Constable Chapel. This altarpiece is possibly the oldest of three that adorn the chapel and is one of the last of Gil de Siloé's known works.¹¹ Estella Marcos notes that Siloé was brought on possibly as late as 1498 to complete the altarpiece and decorative elements of the chapel.¹² The death of Mencía de Mendoza in 1500 put a halt to the work before its definitive completion.

1 The Santa Ana *Retablo*: Patronage and Public Piety

The altarpiece dedicated to St Anne should be (and has been) seen as an important piece in the composition of the chapel, but also as a construct – in its own right – of noble religious patronage. These noble spaces, and the artistic works found within, project the political power and religious piety of an aristocratic elite. Sobré's work on late medieval Castilian retables indicates that, contrary to expectations, few noble Castilian patrons commissioned retablo altarpieces in the late Middle Ages.¹³ This makes similarities in the altarpieces commissioned by noble and royal families all the more significant.

10 The Miraflores Charterhouse is, technically speaking, a Carthusian monastery. The tombs for Juan II of Castile and his wife Isabel of Portugal were built about ten years after Isabel restored the monastery, which had suffered severe damage from a fire in the 1450s. The tombs for Isabel's parents were completed in the last decade of the 15th century, the altarpiece shortly afterwards (ca. 1496–1499).

11 Colum Hourihane (ed.), "Diego de Siloé," in *The Grove Encyclopedia of Medieval Art and Architecture* (Oxford: 2012), 590.

12 Fifteen years of documentary evidence reveal something of the life and art of the Hispano-Flemish sculptor Gil de Siloé. While Gil de Siloé's birthplace remains uncertain, art historians such as Estella Marcos confirm an affinity with artistic practices from the lower Rhine region. He is known primarily for his work on the main altarpiece and royal mausoleum in the Miraflores Charterhouse, and in the Burgos Cathedral for his work on the St Anne Chapel and the Santa Ana altarpiece. For more information, see Margarita Estella Marcos, *La imaginaria de los retablos de la Capilla del Condestable* (Burgos: 1995), 9–10.

13 The distinction between a retable and an altarpiece is a matter much elided. Sobré identifies the *retablo* as a "structure made up of decorative paintings placed behind and above the altar ... [its word in Latin] meaning 'behind the (altar) table.'" In common practice and given the similarities in Spanish and English cognates, *retablo* and retable sometimes have been used interchangeably. In doing so, the terms fail to differentiate structures that incorporate other artistic media, such as sculptures. The more general term for religious structures placed behind an altar that use sculpture or other media is an altarpiece. A third type of structure is the *reredos*, which is placed behind the altar and rises from the ground level. The specific terminology, while useful for modern scholars, may provide a distinction without a true difference for the purposes of this chapter. It

The best known of these spaces is the aforementioned *Cartuja de Miraflores*; the *retablo mayor* (head altar) of this charterhouse was completed shortly before the turn of the 16th century, only five years before Isabel I of Castile's death. The altarpiece was commissioned by the Catholic Queen and completed at the hands of Gil de Siloé's and Diego de la Cruz. The general theme of the altar focuses on the Eucharist, although numerous raised panels also describe the life of Jesus. At the bottom of the altarpiece are Isabel's parents, Juan II and Isabel de Portugal. Each is presented in sculpted panel, kneeling before a *prie-dieu* (prayer desk) with an open book upon the desk's shelf. Each one faces toward the center of the altarpiece's central panel and reflects, presumably, upon the visual iconography portrayed.¹⁴ The *prie-dieu* iconography from the main altarpiece in the Miraflores Charterhouse shares commonalities with other Hispano-Flemish examples dating from the late 15th century. In the Santiago chapel at the Toledo Cathedral, Álvaro de Luna and his wife, Juana de Pimentel, kneel at a *prie-dieu* in two panels at the base of an altarpiece. The chapel was left unfinished upon the infamous death of the king's favorite. Álvaro de Luna's wife (and later his daughter, María de Luna) took on the construction of the chapel. Similarly, Mencía's father, the Marquis of Santillana, and his wife, Catalina Suárez de Figueroa, pray in a *prie-dieu* found within the 16 × 15-foot altarpiece *Gozos de Santa María*.¹⁵ The curiosity of this retablo lies in the marquis's Marian poem of devotion, which is written upon 12 cartouches held by angels. Silva Maroto has identified in the *Gozos de Santa María* retablo "a tribute to the literary work of the Marquis, [whose] texts ... take on a special prominence due to the size of the parchments in proportion to that of the angels."¹⁶ Silva Maroto notes the rarity of this altarpiece imagery within the Iberian Peninsula:

may be assumed that the pious or political intent of the altarpieces herein studied far outweighed the media used to compose them. See Judith Berg Sobré, *Behind the Altar Table: The Development of the Painted Retable in Spain, 1350–1500* (Columbia: 1989), 3, 28.

- 14 Although not in an altarpiece, Fernando and Isabel appear similarly positioned on a *prie-dieu* in the tympanum that serves as the principal entryway to the Santa Engracia Church in Zaragoza, Spain. The tympanum dates from the early 16th century (ca. 1515).
- 15 Additionally, an altarpiece may have existed figuring Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, Mencía's brother, who appears in one of four panels commissioned by him for a Benedictine convent altarpiece in Sopetrán (Guadalajara).
- 16 "todo un homenaje a la obra literaria del marqués, [cuyos] textos ... cobran especial protagonismo por las dimensiones de los pergaminos en proporción a las de los ángeles" (Pilar Silva Maroto, "El Retablo de los Gozos de María de Jorge Inglés," *Boletín del Museo del Prado* 30 [2012]: 6–23, at 13).

The treatment accorded to the portraits of the Marquises of Santillana and their importance within the altarpiece, evidently are exceptionally rare in Castile, but not so in Flanders, where more examples are preserved. This is so much the case that one might think that the prayerful attitude [in which the marquises are depicted] may be due more to the marquis himself than to the artist.¹⁷

Silva Maroto speaks specifically about the *Gozos* altarpiece. Its exceptional nature, she suggests, suggests that the marquis may have been personally involved in his depiction within the painting. But it stands to reason that, should the marquis have controlled his representation, later patrons might also have controlled theirs. As noted above, María de Luna spearheaded the construction of her father's chapel after his death, while Isabel I commissioned the altarpiece at the Miraflores Charterhouse.¹⁸ Given this female management of funerary construction projects, one might suggest female agency in the supplicants' posture and prayer in these and other similar altarpieces.

The posture and position of each supplicant reflect possible female reading practices, as perceived by Elisa Ruiz.¹⁹ Ruiz describes reading as an aural and visual practice commonly used during the reign of Isabel I of Castile. It would not be out of the ordinary to imagine that Isabel I of Castile, whose collection of reading materials consisted predominantly of religious matter, must have both listened to and read devotional religious texts. Ruiz's article specifies the possible outcomes of a reading practice: a *lectura superficial* that sought general comprehension; a *lectura informativa* that entered into more detailed knowledge of the material read; and a *lectura iterativa* that suggested the repetitive reading of religious material necessary for spiritual transcendence and communion with God. Ruiz elaborates on this last form of reading, noting its proximity to meditative prayer, and stating that its success hinged both on manner (*manera de orar*) and bodily attitude (*actitud corporal*). She explains that the former (*manera*) focuses both on the spiritual and performative

17 "El tratamiento que se otorga a los retratos de los marqueses de Santillana y la importancia que se les concede en el conjunto del retablo, evidentemente son excepcionales en Castilla, pero no en Flandes, donde se conservan más ejemplos. Tanto es así que cabría pensar que el que se les muestre en actitud orante quizá se deba más al propio marqués que al artista" (Silva Maroto, "Retablo de los Gozos," 11).

18 Matilde Miquel Juan and Olga Pérez Monzón, "Entre imaginaria, brocados, colores, pinceles y el arte nuevo," *e-Spania* 24 (2016): 7 [<http://journals.openedition.org/e-spania/25527>] DOI: 10.4000/e-spania.25527 [accessed 21 November 2019].

19 Elisa Ruiz, *Las prácticas de lecturas de una reina: Isabel I de Castilla* (Alicante: 2006), <http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/nd/ark:/59851/bmcv98j8> [accessed 19 July 2019].

nature of the words in prayer. For the latter (*actitud*), Ruiz relies upon religious manuals, which offer pictorial or other representations of private devotion as a suggestive representation of real life. The similarities between Isabel's reading practices and the altarpiece panels and sculptures suggest a connection. In each altarpiece, Hispano-Flemish artists rendered the likenesses of these noblemen kneeling at a *prie-dieu*. A book sits upon the *prie-dieu* shelf while each supplicant gazes upon the devotional image presumably represented by the written word. The reading practice and reflective image thus presents a 'how-to' of sorts, echoed in miniatures, painting, and sculpture. Ruiz reports multiple images of Isabel kneeling in prayer and describes both the theatrical performativity and the private nature of these images. What becomes apparent through these pictures is the enabling value of the devotional image. In this representation, one sees the way to attain a spiritual communion with God. When viewed by others, in painting or other artistic media, it serves as a confirmation of the supplicant's communion with a higher power.

Ruiz's study suggests that the contents of 16 chests found in Queen Isabel's *recámara* serve as a testament to her character. The written contents contain materials that the queen and, by extension, other noblewomen may have used habitually. Scripture and devotional material form the bulk of the contents of these 16 chests. While no hagiographical material (such as that found in the popular *Flos sanctorum*) is specified, the popularity of devotional hagiographic material in the late Middle Ages must also be considered.²⁰ Gatland has identified at least three manuscripts within the royal library that may be traced to Voragine's *Golden Legend*.²¹ Of these, Baños Vallejo notes that one was commissioned personally by Isabel, as seen in the following letter:

Venerable Father Prior, you know how from Seville I wrote to you requesting that you have the book *Flos sanctorum* written for me. And because I need it, I entreat you that if it is written you send it to me quickly; and if not, hasten to finish it quickly. Send it to me in a good hand and *çisternado*

20 Baños Vallejo's research has proven invaluable in exploring the prevalence and importance of medieval hagiography. See *Hagiografía como género literario en la Edad Media* (Oviedo: 1989) and *Las vidas de los santos en la literatura* (Madrid: 2003). For a study of female readership in the early modern period, see Pedro Cátedra, *Bibliotecas y lecturas de mujeres* (Salamanca: 2004). This work collects inventories of the libraries owned by 278 women of various social standings from the 16th century, in which 39.2 per cent of the books inventoried deal with religious matter (another 40.2 per cent contain matter that is unidentified).

21 Emma Gatland, *Women from the Golden Legend: Female Authority in a Medieval Castilian Sanctoral* (Woodbridge: 2011), 4.

in parchment, which I will value greatly and consider a service to me.
From the city of Zaragoza the 13th day of February of 1488. I the Queen.²²

Isabel's insistence on its completion suggests a great desire for the work, while her need (*menester*) implies personal use. The importance of the *Golden Legend* in elite circles has also been attested to by Emma Gatland, who notes that of the 12 extant Castilian medieval manuscripts of Voragine's work, only one comes from a non-noble source (two pertained to the Counts of Haro).²³

The popularity of the *Golden Legend* within noble houses can be demonstrated further through the recently identified altarpiece panel *Mary, Queen of Heavens*, which resides in the National Gallery (Washington, D.C.). While Pereda has identified the panel as belonging to Mencía's mother-in-law, Beatriz de Manrique, Eisler has shown that the panel uses Voragine's *Golden Legend* as its source. Pereda further supposes that the panel may have benefited from one of Haro's two Castilian translations of Voragine's work.²⁴ Mencía de Mendoza thus would have read the *Golden Legend* and seen images representing this work as a married woman. She also could have read the work as a child, since it can be presumed that the Marquis of Santillana, Mencía's father, owned a copy of Voragine's *Legend*. He makes a reference to St Catherine in his poetry. While glossing eight lines dedicated to the virgin saint and martyr, the marquis writes: "Catherine, was a virgin [...] considered very notable among all the other saints; the life and death of whom, as it is very well known, I remit to the *Flos sanctorum* book."²⁵

22 "Venerable padre prior, ya sabéis cómo desde Sevilla vos ove escripto rogándovos me fiziédeses escrivir el libro flos santorum. E porque yo lo he menester, yo vos ruego que si está escripto me lo enbiéis luego; e si non, dad priesa en que se acabe luego. E de muy buena letra e cisternado en pargamino me lo enbiéys a buen recabdo, lo qual vos gradesceré mucho y terné en servicio. De la cibdad de Çaragoça a XIII días de febrero de LXXXVIII años. Yo la Reina" (quoted in Fernando Baños Vallejo, "Para Isabel la Católica: La singularidad de un *flos sanctorum* [ms. h-II-18 de El Escorial]," in *Los códices literarios de la Edad Media. Interpretación, historia, técnicas y catalogación*, ed. Pedro Cátedra [Salamanca: 2009], 175–76). "Çisternado" is a type of quire made out of six bifolios, two of which were parchment and four paper, with the latter placed between the former.

23 Gatland, *Women from the Golden Legend*, 4–5.

24 Felipe Pereda, "Liturgy as Women's Language: Two Noble Patrons Prepare for the End in Fifteenth-Century Spain," in *Researching the Roles of Women as Makers of Medieval Art and Architecture*, ed. Therese Martin (Leiden: 2012), 959.

25 "Catherina, virgen fue [...] entre todas las otras santas havida por muy insigne; la vida y muerte de la qual, commo sea muy vulgar, remito al libro del *Flos Sanctorum*" (Íñigo López de Mendoza [Marqués de Santillana], *Obras completas*, ed. Ángel Gómez Moreno and Maximilian P.A.M. Kerkhof [Madrid: 1988], 241–42).

Mencía de Mendoza very probably would have read or listened to the stories of saints' lives from an early age. She certainly would have had access to tales of the saints as a married woman. Given the use of literature in art, for example in artwork commissioned by Mencía's father and her mother-in-law, it would not be out of the ordinary to suggest that Mencía may have used the *Flos sanctorum* in her own patronage and as a means to express her religious devotion. This argument is suggestive when considering the particulars of the retablo commissioned by María de Luna (ca. 1488) for her father's chapel in the Toledo Cathedral. Miquel Juan and Pérez Monzón believe that María de Luna used the Santiago altarpiece to rehabilitate her father's image. They suggest that the altarpiece visually exemplifies in Álvaro de Luna the ideals of Christian virtue and that it showcases Luna as a faithful servant to Castile. They suggest further that María de Luna used a poetic work written by the Marqués de Santillana, the *Doctrinal de Privados*, as a way of identifying the negative charges against María's father.²⁶

Regardless of the specific use of one particular book, it is important to note the variety of literary media in the altarpiece panels of the Santiago Chapel's *retablo*. Books and manuscripts appear in several panels. Miquel Juan and Pérez Monzón believe they refer to Luna's role as an author, or else reveal his religious devotion or innate character.²⁷ Regardless of the exact reasons for the use of these written materials, this connection between written word and artistic media offers yet another example in which a noblewoman (married into the Mendoza family) used written source material to inform the creation of an altarpiece. For Mencía de Mendoza, the popularity of the *Flos sanctorum* and its frequent occurrence in painting thus make plausible its use as a source for the St Anne Altarpiece. The variety of saintly statuary, its location at the entrance to the Constable Chapel, and the access granted by the steps leading to the altar suggest different vantage points from which to look upon each of the polychromatic structures. In essence, the altarpiece resembles a living *prie-dieu* not unlike those represented in her family's retablo panels or in the sculpted supplicants in the Miraflores altarpiece. One might imagine the *Retablo de Santa Ana* as a live space for a devout supplicant who kneels in prayer in a material profession of faith before a multitude of martyred female saints.

26 This work would have been accessible to María de Luna, as her husband was the Marqués de Santillana's grandson and, importantly, Mencía de Mendoza's nephew. See Miquel Juan and Pérez Monzón, "Entre imaginaria," 15.

27 Miquel Juan and Pérez Monzón, "Entre imaginaria," 19–22.

2 At the Altar: Mother, Virgin, Queen

Mencía de Mendoza died before the completion of her altarpiece. Because of this, any ulterior motivation for its creation and use is strictly a matter of conjecture. But the mostly female statuary of the altarpiece has caused many to wonder at the reason for its composition. The principal image of worship of the *Retablo de Santa Ana* is the central polychromatic statue of St Anne Triple (see fig. 4.2).²⁸

Statuary and other iconic representations of St Anne, the Madonna and Child supported the belief in the Immaculate Conception of Mary, a religious tenet held by the Franciscan Order, which the Counts of Haro and Isabel I of Castile favored in patronage and spiritual devotion. Lesley Twomey has determined that St Anne's Immaculate Conception of Mary was celebrated in Castile by the late 14th century, although the Church still questioned the doctrine a century later.²⁹ In Aragon, Twomey documents kingly edicts championing the Conceptionist cause from as early as 1393, but also records continued tensions regarding the doctrine until at least 1477, when Pope Sixtus IV gave approval for its feast day on 8 December.³⁰ The unresolved state of the Conception dogma notwithstanding, support for the doctrine was apparent in the Iberian Peninsula. For example, Beatriz de Manrique, Mencía de Mendoza's mother-in-law, orders in her last will and testament that "some good cleric ... pray for me at the office [of the mass] of when our lady Saint Anne conceived our lady."³¹ Ruiz-Gálvez Priego notes that Isabel and her court ladies kept to

28 This iconography (*Santa Ana Triple* or *Santa Ana Trina*) represents a tradition not found within sacred Scriptures, although it may be found within apocryphal texts such as the *Protoevangelium of St James* (Infancy Gospel), in Pseudo-Matthew, and in the *Evangelium* of Mary's Nativity. The story and representations of Saint Anne can be found in Western Europe as early as the 8th century, although a cult following may have started when pilgrims and knights returned from the Crusades. It is curious to note that the dogmatic debate in favor of the Immaculate Conception of Mary was spearheaded in the Council of Basel by two Castilian clergy: Juan de Torquemada (the future Cardinal San Sixtus) and Juan de Segovia, a Franciscan who formed part of the delegation presided over by Alonso de Cartagena. However, the *summa* of arguments presented in favor of Anne, the *Tractatus de veritate conceptionis*, was never presented at the Council. For additional information, see Esther Ruiz Gálvez Priego, "Sine Labe. El inmaculismo en la España de los siglos xv a xvii: La proyección social de un imaginario religioso," *Revista de Dialectología y Tradiciones Populares* 63.2 (2008), 197–241; and Lesley Twomey, *The Serpent and the Rose: The Immaculate Conception and Hispanic Poetry in the Late Medieval Period* (London: 2008), 23–46.

29 Twomey, *Serpent and Rose*, 14, 45–46.

30 Twomey, *Serpent and Rose*, 39, 43.

31 "algund buen clerigo ... me diga el ofiçio de quando nuestra señora santa Ana conçebio a nuestra señora" (Pereda, "Liturgy as Women's Language," 979).



FIGURE 4.2 Saint Anne Retable, detail of Saint Anne Triple, Burgos Cathedral

PHOTO COURTESY OF RAFA SÁIZ

the rite of the Immaculate Conception; Fernando ordered that the liturgy be celebrated in Aragon as of 1503.³²

The general acceptance of the Immaculate Conception doctrine in Castile (and Aragon) can also be surmised from a more propagandistic use of its ideas. Associations between Anne and Isabel can be found, for example, in letters to the queen. Diego de Valera writes:

It can truly be said that just as our Lord wanted our glorious Lady to be born so that from her could issue the universal Redeemer of the human race, so did he determine that you, My Lady, should be born so as to reform and restore these kingdoms and rescue them from the tyrannical government under which they have long remained ³³

The analogy presented in Valera's letter to Isabel I subtly emphasizes the power held by the queen, which highlights her redemptive qualities. Isabel has come to redeem her people like Mary, who was born to fulfill a divine prophecy of Christian redemption. Surtz furthers this idea by suggesting that Isabel's self-fashioning as a pious ruler and promoter of learning is directly reflected in Pietro Monti's, now lost, *Opusculum de Conceptione Virginis*.³⁴ Surtz notes that this literary connection between the Catholic Monarch and the Virgin Mary, published in Milan in 1492,

[...] was at once a public expression of her Marian devotion, an intervention in religious politics through which she chose sides with respect to a controversial theological issue, and an image-building act that reinforced the association between the redemptive roles of the Queen of Castile and the Queen of Heaven.³⁵

32 Ruiz Gálvez Priego, "Sine Labe," 201.

33 "Bien se puede con verdad desir, que asy commo nuestro Señor quiso en este mundo nasciese la gloriosa Señora nuestra, porque della procediese el vniuersal Redentor del linaje humano, asy determinó, vos, Señora, nasciédeses para reformar é restaurar estos reynos é sacarlos de la tyránica gouernacion en que tan luenga mente han estado" (Diego de Valera, *Epístolas de Mosen Diego de Valera enbiadas en diversos tiempos é á diversas personas* [Madrid: 1878], 46; the English translation appears in Barbara Weissberger, *Isabel Rules: Constructing Queenship, Wielding Power* [Minneapolis: 1993], 56–57).

34 Ronald Surtz, "The Reciprocal Construction of Isabelline Book Patronage," in *Queen Isabel I of Castile: Power, Patronage, Persona*, ed. Barbara F. Weissberger (Rochester, NY: 2008), 55–70, at 56.

35 Surtz, "Reciprocal Construction," 56–57.

This sophisticated connection between queens terrestrial and celestial is echoed again in *Cancionero* poetry. These works, together, suggest a political program of propaganda that actively fashions Isabel as a pious, if not divine, ruler. Kaplan's study on *converso* poets during the Catholic Monarchs' reign goes much further. He includes Antón de Montoro's "Canción ... en loor de la Reyna doña Ysabel de Castilla" and notes how the poem divinizes the queen by identifying the shared holy qualities of the Virgin Mother and the Catholic Queen:

High Sovereign Queen, if you had been born before the daughter of Saint Anne, the Son of God would have been made flesh from you. Since what is beautiful, saintly, wise is proven through experience, You owe what that one, the perfect Virgin, with exception to divinity, owes. And, since our glory and life are won through you, if Saint Anne had not given birth until you had been born, from you the Son of God would have been made flesh.³⁶

Montoro's hypothetical suggestion that Isabel could have replaced the daughter of Saint Anne creates an implicit connection between the roles played by the Virgin Mother and the Castilian queen. The idea that had St Anne not given birth until Isabel came into the world, St Anne would have borne Isabel conflates Mary with Isabel. The equivalence between the two superimposes the role of divine will with that of royal disposition, given that a royal disposition to care for one's subjects' wellbeing is sublimated by the divine will to

36 Alta Reyna soberana
 si fuérades antes vos
 que la hija de Sant'Ana,
 de vos el Hijo de Dios
 recibiera carne humana.
 Que bella, santa, discreta,
 por experiéncia se prueve,
 aquélla Virgen perfecta,
 la divinidad ecepta,
 esso le debéys que os debe.
 Y pues que por vos se gana
 la vida y gloria de nos,
 si no pariera Sant'Ana
 hasta ser nascida vos,
 de vos el Hijo de Dios rescibiera carne humana. (In Gregory Kaplan, "In Search of Salvation: The Deification of Isabel la Católica in *Converso* Poetry," *Hispanic Review* 66.3 [1998]: 289–308, at 299).

save humankind. If the Saint Anne Triple figure serves as a discreet nod to the Catholic Monarch, it makes this connection through an emphasis on religious reading practices. The prominent placement of a miniaturized book in the hands of St Anne echoes stories told about the Virgin's mother.

Neither the St Anne story nor the Virgin's story appears in canonical gospels, yet references to the Virgin's literacy were well-known by the end of the Middle Ages.³⁷ The saintly mother of the Mother of God taught her daughter how to read, and thus, images of St Anne Triple modeled for noble ladies a social and gendered role. As described by Sheingorn,

the figure of Saint Anne functioned symbolically for a wide range of social groups in their cultural practices [...]. [St Anne] was called on by individual women as a sympathetic intercessor in childbearing.³⁸

Saint Anne gained prominence in both narrative and iconography with the diffusion of Voragine's *Golden Legend*. Gomez Redondo notes that no extant Castilian translations of Voragine's *Legend* refer specifically to the lives of St Anne and her husband, St Joachim, although the source material – apocryphal Christmas gospel narratives – did exist in Castile.³⁹ But despite the absence of a chapter rubric dedicated to the *vitae* of Anne and Joachim, one of the Count of Haro's manuscripts details much of their story. Included in the BNM 12.689 manuscript is the title “ystoria de la fiesta de la natiuidat de la madre del saluador abogada nuestra.” While the chapter discusses first and at length the genealogy of both of Jesus's maternal grandparents, it then narrates well-known

37 See Pamela Sheingorn, “‘The Wise Mother’: The Image of St. Anne Teaching the Virgin Mary,” *Gesta* 32.1 (1993): 69–80; and Wendy Scase, “St. Anne and the Education of the Virgin,” in *England in the Fourteenth Century* (Proceedings of the 1991 Harlaxton Symposium), ed. Nicholas Rogers (Stamford: 1993), 81–96.

38 Sheingorn, “The Wise Mother,” 72.

39 Ángel Gómez Redondo, *Historia de la prosa de los Reyes Católicos: El umbral del Renacimiento*, vol. 1 (Madrid: 2012), 986–87. Gómez Redondo lists the source material: the *Protoevangelio de Santiago*, the *Evangelio del Pseudo-Mateo*, and the *Evangelio de la Natividad de María*. Both Escorial H-I-14 and BNM ms. 780 list in their indices stories related to St Anne. By 1511, Jacob Chromberger had published “The life and excellencies and miracles of Saint Anne and of the glorious Saint Mary, our lady, until the age of fourteen” (“La vida y excelencias & miraglos de Santa Ana y de la gloriosa nuestra señora Santa María fasta la edad de quatorze años”). A digitalized copy of the 1550 edition of this book, housed in the repository of the Universidad de Oviedo, curiously dedicates the work to Isabel's daughter Juana, referred to with the epithet “very high and powerful catholic queen and lady” (“muy alta y muy poderosa catholica reyna y señora”) (<http://digibuo.uniovi.es/dspace/handle/10651/5576>).

stories about them. For example, it tells the story of Anne and Joachim's childlessness, and then recounts how an angel came to Joachim and proclaimed:

I am the angel of the Lord, and I am sent to you to tell you that your prayers have been heard [...] and when [the Lord] closes the womb of a woman he does it to show miraculously that that which is born from it comes not out of the root of carnal desire but from the grace of God. And so Anne, your wife, will conceive and give birth to a daughter. You will call her Mary and she will be, as you promised, consecrated to the Lord from the time of her youth. And she will be full of the holy spirit from within the womb of her mother.⁴⁰

The chapter then relates Anne and Joachim's meeting at the Golden Gate, Mary's birth, her education at the Jerusalem temple, her marriage to Joseph, and the angel Gabriel's Annunciation. After this, the chapter ends the narrative with several miracles performed through the intercession of the Virgin Mary.

Saint Anne's presence in the Golden Legend story, her centrality in the altarpiece, and the interpretative possibilities of saint and monarch suggest a shared enthusiasm for Conceptionist doctrine. Anne's subtle importance in the literature and art of Mencía de Mendoza and Isabel I also connects these Castilian women. For Mencía this connection may be observed in the placement of St Anne on the altar that bears her name. The statue of Saint Anne Triple appears in the second tier (*piso*) of the three frontal alleys. Saints Helen, mother of the Emperor Constantine, and Isabel (a.k.a. Elizabeth), mother of St John the Baptist, flank the mother of the Mother of God, and as such may share some interpretive relevance. Castilian *Golden Legend* manuscripts do not provide chapters dedicated to the lives of these saints. But like in the Haro manuscript, their stories do appear in chapters whose titles elide their religious importance. St Helen, for example, appears within the chapter on the Holy Cross. Elizabeth's story is intuited from chapters on her son or about the Annunciation. Additionally, these saints both give birth to major figures in the evolution and development of Christian faith. Like St Anne, Helen and Elizabeth are better known for their offspring than for themselves.

40 "Yo so el angel del sennor & so enbiado a ty a te dezir que son oydas tus oraciones [...] e quando cierra el vientre de alguna muger fazelo por demostrar marauillosamente que no es de rrayz de deleyte carnal aquello que nasce mas de don diuinal [...] Et por ende anna tu muger concebira & parira vna fija & poner le as nombre maria & sera ssegunt prometistes consagrada al sennor desde su njnez. & sera llena de espritu santo desdel vientre de la madre" (*Flos sanctorum*, fol. 69v).

Women such as Mencía or Isabel I of Castile, who so poignantly felt the need for an heir, may very well have felt a certain affinity for these saints. For both noblewoman and queen, the preference for a male heir would have been obvious. Both women waited several years before bearing a son. Mencía gave birth to five daughters before her son Bernardino was born. Perea Rodríguez assumes Mencía's desire for a male son, although this initial longing is later replaced by "a more than probable mutual dislike and distrust between mother and child."⁴¹ The child Bernardino is thought to have been named in honor of St Bernardino of Siena.⁴² The child was conceived, as Francisco Gonzaga notes in an apocryphal miracle tale within *De origine Seraphicae religionis* (1587), after St Bernardino stayed with the Counts of Haro at their Herrera de Pisuergra palace.⁴³ The saint, through prayer, interceded on behalf of the parents and made possible the child's birth.

Although Isabel married in 1469, the dynastic male heir Juan de Castilla y Aragón would not be born until almost a decade later. The importance of a male heir in Castile is evident; the anxiety for the prince's survival is made manifest in the following quote from Azcona:

Isabel could not contain herself when she saw something exceptional for her son's wardrobe: fabrics, stitching, gold and silver embroidery, furs and linings for his servants. Constant shipments of rose water, brown sugar, honey, and syrup are noted for the prince's provisions. That weak and sickly person must have been constantly under a microscope while growing up. The account books are plagued by religious references to pilgrimages, promises, pledges, votive offerings, oblations, and the purchase of mementos.⁴⁴

References to a saint's name and pilgrimages are yet another indication of the religious significance and import of saintly figures within the lives of

41 "un más que probable mutuo recelo y desconfianza entre madre e hijo" (Perea Rodríguez, "Mito y realidad," 120).

42 Perea Rodríguez, "Mito y realidad," 120; Pereda, "Mencía de Mendoza," 26.

43 Quoted in Paulino Montero, "Patrocinio religioso," 415.

44 "Isabel no sabía contenerse cuando veía algo curioso para la guardarropía de su hijo: telas, hechuras, bordados con hilo de oro y plata, pieles y forros para sus servidores. Para la despensa del príncipe se anotan de continuo partidas de agua rosada, azúcar tostado, miel y almíbar. Aquel ser débil y enfermizo tuvo que ser criado entre fanales y laminarias. Las Cuentas están plagadas de referencias religiosas a peregrinaciones, promesas, exvotos, ofrendas y compra de recuerdos" (Tarsicio de Azcona, *Isabel la Católica* [Madrid: 1993], 399).

noblewoman and queen. This interpretation of the central tier of the St Anne altarpiece is thus plausible, even if further analysis of the Burgos altarpiece remains tenuous. This is despite the admirable efforts at restoration by the Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia, Centro Nacional de Información y Comunicación Educativa in 2004.⁴⁵ The restoration addressed the damages to the chapel slowly accumulated by the passage of time and the ravages of man. The first tier (*piso* or *cuerpo*) from left to right contains the statues of St Dorothy, the dead Christ held up by two angels, and St Mary of Egypt.⁴⁶ Sitting upon the first tier, the second *piso* includes (as previously noted) from left to right: St Elizabeth with the future St John the Baptist, St Anne Triple, and St Helen. The topmost tier includes, again from left to right: St Barbara, St Catherine, and either St Martha, Marina, or Margarita. There is also a lateral edge to the retablo with three niches to its *calle*. In this lateral alley one finds, from top to bottom: Saints Agnes, Mary Magdalene, and (possibly) Perpetua. In addition to these larger polychromatic statues, the St Anne altarpiece held approximately 60 statues in its predella and niches. About 25 diminutive statues are found on the predella; they are exquisitely, but generically, represented as martyrs through the palm leaf or the book that they hold. (This predella serves as a base to the previously-mentioned saints found in the alleys of the *retablo*.) Twelve smaller niches are found in the masonry columns that separate the larger niches of the altarpiece. These smaller niches are found in the second and third tiers (*cuerpos*) of the altarpiece. Only nine statues from these smaller niches remain, and none is clearly identified except by the palm of martyrdom or a holy book. Estella Marcos has remarked that these carved statues resemble noble ladies “de un cortejo real,” rather than saints, and has suggested that these figures respond to a chivalric idealization of women rather than a religious and hagiographic representation of them.⁴⁷ This distinction would certainly have been felt by religious moralists in later centuries, especially by

45 <http://recursos.cnice.mec.es/restauracion/index.php?seccion=2>.

46 The dead Christ sustained by two angels may elaborate further upon this interpretation of saintly propaganda. This statue, which mourns the death of the Son of God and invites the kneeler to meditate upon His suffering, moves one towards lamentation. But also, the presence of angels by Christ's side is thought to signify God's imminent resurrection. As such, the angels' presence allows for a revival of hope. The lamentation and anticipation of Christ's resurrection may have provided a base upon which to project analogous sentiments for the Castilian Crown. While the Catholic Monarchs' heir died in 1497, Isabel's eldest daughter gave birth the following year to a son, Manuel de la Paz. Both Manuel de la Paz and Mencía de Mendoza died in 1500; it is likely that the death of the latter preceded that of the Portuguese prince.

47 Marcos, *La imaginaria de los retablos*, 42.

those who eschewed medieval versions of the Golden Legend for their fanciful and fantastic nature. But at the close of the Middle Ages, the divide between chivalric tale and hagiographic narrative would not have been unbreachable. More to the point, Estella Marcos's observations suggest a courtly and refined inspiration for these statues. They are statues meant for noble (if not royal) ladies. Even those statues of figures with questionable moral behaviors represent ladies of wealthy and aristocratic families as told in the Castilian versions of Voragine's *oeuvre*. The Haro manuscripts, although incomplete, collectively contain lives of seven of the altarpiece's identifiable saints. BNM 780, from which the manuscript once pertaining to the Counts of Haro is thought to be derived, includes almost all the presumed saints of the altarpiece. The only missing saint from these versions of the *Golden Legend* is St Dorothy, whose identification has been questioned by Crosas.⁴⁸

The lack of certainty in identifying all the statues of the St Anne altarpiece makes offering a comprehensive understanding of the work impossible. Even still, the combination of chaste martyrs and mothers in the St Anne altarpiece can be said to promote ideals in keeping with those that represent all noble women, if not specifically the Castilian Catholic Queen. Peter Martyr of Anghiera makes this evident in a letter written upon the queen's demise:

Her determination [was] in banishing vice and promoting virtue, which was more readily known to you than to me or anyone else, since you helped her in her endeavors. With the exception of only one, among all those women that our faith by decree of our Supreme Pontiffs venerates in the catalogue of its female saints, who else could you show me to have a more fervent love for mercy, purity, and virtue? Not only was she during her life a model of chastity among all married women, but she could with right and reason call herself Chastity personified. After the Immaculate Virgin Mother of God – for whose cause this prediction appears to be spoken – this prophecy could be applied to her: God performed a miracle upon the land and a woman surrounded man.⁴⁹

48 Crosas questions the attribution of saints Perpetua and Dorothy to the St Anne retable. The former saint appears tangentially with St Felicity within a chapter heading in BNM 780 [fol. 2r], while the latter has not been found in extant Castilian manuscripts or incubula of the *Golden Legend*.

49 "Su tesón en desterrar los vicios, en promover las virtudes, más conocido que a mí o que a otro cualquiera es para vosotros, que fuiste partícipes de sus tareas. Excepción hecha de una sola, entre las mujeres que por decreto de los Sumos Pontífices nuestra religión adora en el catálogo de las santas, ¿a cuál otra me mostraréis en él que tuviera más férvida veneración por la piedad, por la pureza y por la honestidad? No sólo entre las matronas

If we are to believe Peter Martyr, the Catholic Queen was second only to the Virgin Mary. Like the one by Antón de Montoro, these descriptions of the queen put forth the idea of the monarch's quasi-divine nature. It is not unreasonable to assume, then, that Mencía de Mendoza might also have wanted to use this type of religious association.

By way of the *Flos sanctorum*, Mencía de Mendoza produced an altarpiece that could have exalted the Catholic Monarch. At the same time, Mencía promoted through the altarpiece an idealized, religious, gender-normative sentiment and strengthened political (if not personal) ties between her family and the royal court. The import of a connection between these women can be found not only because books are represented in the artistic works already mentioned, but also through family ties. Íñigo López de Mendoza and Catalina Suárez de Figueroa, represented in the *Gozos de Santa María*, were Mencía's parents. Her father, the marquis, was present during the Castilian King Juan II's second marriage to Isabel I of Castile's mother. Mencía de Mendoza's eldest brother, Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, married the niece of Juan II's *valido* Álvaro de Luna. Diego Hurtado de Mendoza at first aligned the family with Isabel's rival claimant to the throne, Juana, "*la mal llamada Beltraneja*." Diego later allied the family with the Isabelline faction and was rewarded with the title of Duke of the Infantado. Diego Hurtado de Mendoza's son, Íñigo López de Mendoza, married Álvaro de Luna's daughter, María de Luna. But perhaps the best indication of the ties that linked the Velasco and Mendoza families to Isabel I of Castile may be seen in sacramental moments, such as when Mencía's husband stood as godfather to the monarch's son and heir, Juan, Prince of Asturias (1478), or when the royal family stayed at the Casa del Cordón to celebrate the prince's wedding (1497).

Felipe Pereda notes Mencía's magnificence and claims that, after the queen, Mencía was the most powerful and rich woman in Castile.⁵⁰ This belief must certainly stem from the connections provided by her family. The preeminence of Mencía's younger brother Pedro González de Mendoza further connects Mencía to Isabel and her court.⁵¹ This connection assuredly benefited

fue durante su vida ejemplo de castidad, sino que con derecho y razón podía llamarse la Castidad misma. Después de la Inmaculada Virgen Madre de Dios – por cuya causa parece pronunciado este vaticinio –, se le puede aplicar a ella aquella profecía: Dios hizo una maravilla sobre la tierra y una mujer rodeó al hombre" (Pedro Mártir, *Epistolario*, ed. José López de Toro [Madrid: 1953], 90–91).

50 Pereda, "Mencía de Mendoza," 12.

51 Known as the "Gran Cardenal de España," Pedro González de Mendoza was by 1473 a strong advocate for a united Spain and the Catholic Monarchs. He was one of Isabel and Fernando's foremost advisors, especially in political and spiritual matters. It was Pedro González de Mendoza who introduced Hernando de Talavera to the court of Isabel I of

Mencia and her husband. Pedro Fernández de Velasco belonged to a family already grown in prominence during the Trastamaran dynasty, and it continued to flourish with the tools commonly used by nobility: inheritance, political marriages, royal *mercedes*, and martial prowess (in this latter case, during the conquest of Granada).⁵² A curious, if somewhat obscure, example of these noble machinations may be seen in the marriage of Mencia's second son, Íñigo Fernández de Velasco, to María de Tovar in 1482. Franco Silva suggests that this marriage had been planned to thwart the pretensions of María's uncles and cousins to the Tovar estate. These extended family members had tried to take the lands from María de Tovar on Salic claims. It is not unreasonable to suggest that the Bishop of Cuenca, whom Franco Silva believes to have been María de Tovar's tutor and who helped write her marriage contract, may have favored preventing his pupil's disinheritance. This Bishop of Cuenca, presumably Fray Alonso de Burgos, was chaplain, confessor, and chancellor to Isabel I of Castile and a staunch defender of Isabel's right to the throne. Fray Alonso, in addition to aiding María de Tovar, may also have seen the benefit in furnishing a title for the second son of the Counts of Haro. As evidence of these strange but important courtly spheres of influence and favor, María de Tovar's marriage contract stipulated that "the Bishop and Don Pedro agreed that the Catholic Queen should determine the arms and surname that the firstborn of the marriage would receive."⁵³

Given the generational ties between noble and royal houses, it would not be surprising to see that the *Retablo de Santa Ana*, commissioned by the daughter

Castile, and who suggested that he serve the queen as confessor and advisor (see Peggy Liss, *Isabel the Queen* [Philadelphia: 2004], 365). Hernando de Talavera's letter on the ideal behavior for noble ladies, dedicated to María de Pacheco, contains acts of prayer-like reading similar to the reading practices described by Elisa Ruiz. María de Pacheco's sister also happened to be Mencia de Mendoza's sister-in-law. Mencia's daughter, María de Velasco, in an odd turn of events, later married María Pacheco's father, Juan Pacheco, the first Marquis of Villena, in 1472.

52 Towards the end of the reign of the Catholic Monarchs, one may see this family realigning itself more closely with Fernando II of Aragón, and later with Charles I. In the former case, it should be noted that Mencia's first-born son contracts marriage with his second wife, Juana de Aragón, who is Fernando's illegitimate daughter. Mencia's fifth child, a daughter by the name of Juana de Velasco, marries Francisco Tomás de Borja, Marquis of Llombay. This title had been given by the Catholic Monarchs to the Aragonese pope, Rodrigo Borja.

53 "el Obispo y D. Pedro acordaron dejar al cuidado de la Reina Católica las armas y apellido que recibiría el primogénito del matrimonio" (Alfonso Franco Silva, "Aportación al estudio de los señoríos sorianos. El caso de Berlanga de Duero y los Tovar," *Mayurqua* 22.1 [1989]: 255–268, at 260–61).

of a political and literary figure such as the Marquis of Santillana, might have been conceived from a literary source. Nor would it be surprising to see that this altarpiece, commissioned by the daughter of the Marquis of Santillana, might have been used to promote the shared spiritual and political ideals of noblewoman and Castilian queen. The books that each of the female saints hold within the St Anne altarpiece reflect saintly tales within medieval books of saints. Within this altarpiece dedicated to the mother of the Virgin Mary, these books are rife with symbolic possibilities. The import of reading and teaching is found in the genealogy of the Virgin, whose mother taught her to read, and whose Son is the personified example of Christian doctrine.

The import of mothers and maternity, as seen in the central panel of the altar, might have highlighted the role of women in Christian doctrine and in life. A possible nod to Isabel I can be found through comparisons to Anne and the Virgin that highlight the queen's religious zeal and political objectives of deliverance and unification. If the St Anne analogy is applied to the queen, whose normative monarchic role was to serve as mother to her people (by promoting their welfare and defending them from abuse and excess), we see Isabel within the divine genealogy of women as mothers and teachers. If Mencía de Mendoza consciously created this analogy in the St Anne altarpiece, it suggests a shared cultural expression of female piety and political savvy.

Art Patronized and Collected by Queen Isabel

Jessica Weiss

Like many 15th-century European rulers, Isabel of Castile was acutely aware of the importance and power of material culture to construct an aura of magnificence. To this end, she was an active patron who commissioned and collected tapestries, codices, metalwork, panel paintings, and other art objects. The queen also sponsored several large architectural projects that incorporated stained glass, sculptures, and paintings to create site-specific articulations of royal identity. The reconstruction of Isabel's patronage activities relies on a number of different sources, the most important of which is the queen's last will and testament and coinciding inventories.¹ The surviving documentation reveals Isabel's voracious appetite for collecting, listing hundreds of paintings, tapestries, books, metal work, and other luxury goods.

Isabel used her artistic patronage to fashion her monarchical identity and further her political aims. Through orchestrated events that included the display of luxury objects from the queen's collection, Isabel cultivated a reputation as a wealthy and sophisticated ruler. The vast majority of the objects that formed the queen's collection were crafted with a Northern European aesthetic. Similarly, many of the built environments sponsored by Isabel employed a late Gothic architectural vocabulary, which at the time was often referred to as "German."² Isabel's aesthetics both participated in international artistic trends and subtly connected the queen to the famed Dukes of Burgundy,

1 Isabel's last will and testament was finalized in Medina del Campo on 12 October 1504 (Archivo General de Simancas, Patronato Real 30–2). Isabel amended her will with a codicil dated 23 November 1504 (Biblioteca Nacional, MS. Vit. 6–6). Both documents are published in Antonio de la Torre y del Cerro, *Testamentaria de Isabel la Católica* (Barcelona: 1974), 61–101. For an analysis of the documents related to the liquidation of her possessions, see José Julio Martín Barba, "El desarrollo de la almoneda de los bienes muebles de Isabel la Católica," *Historia. Instituciones. Documentos* 46 (2019): 249–82. A small number of objects formed a royal donation to Isabel's funerary chapel; many still remain *in situ* (Torre y del Cerro, *Testamentaria de Isabel la Católica*, 84–85; José Manuel Pita Andrade, "Pinturas y pintores de Isabel la Católica," in *Isabel la Católica y el arte*, ed. Gonzalo Anes and Álvarez de Castrillón [Madrid: 2006], 15–16; and Miguel Ángel Zalama Rodríguez, "Tapices donados por los Reyes Católicos en la Capilla Real de Granada," *Archivo Español de Arte* 87 [2014]: 1–14).

2 Fernando Marías, *El siglo XVI: Gótico y Renacimiento* (Madrid: 1992), 38.

whose sumptuously ritualized court set the standard for 15th-century magnificence.³ Isabel leveraged this association to negotiate treaties and cement alliances within a Northern European milieu while also articulating a specifically Castilian position.

1 **Constructed Environments of San Juan de los Reyes and the *Cartuja de Miraflores***

Isabel's artistic patronage dates to the earliest years of her reign. Following the decisive Battle of Toro in March of 1476, Isabel and Fernando vowed to found a monastic church in Toledo.⁴ Within a year, the queen and king laid the first foundation stone for a monastery dedicated to St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist, known as San Juan de los Reyes (Figures 5.1–5.5).⁵

The structure designed by Juan Guas and Simón de Colonia mixes classical and Mozarabic elements into the predominantly Gothic structure.⁶ The

3 Tess Knighton, "Northern Influence on Cultural Developments in the Iberian Peninsula," *Renaissance Studies* 7 (1987): 222–23; Marina Belozerskaya, *Rethinking the Renaissance: Burgundian Arts Across Europe* (Cambridge: 2002), 146.

4 Tarsicio de Azcona, *Isabel la Católica: Estudio crítico de su vida y su reinado* (Madrid: 1964), 249; Antonio Macía Serrano, "San Juan de los Reyes y la batalla de Toro," *Toletum: Boletín de la Real Academia de Bellas Artes y Ciencias de Toledo* 9 (1979): 55–70, at 69. For a description of this event by Isabel's royal chronicler, see Hernando Pulgar, *Crónica de los Señores Reyes Católicos Don Fernando y Doña Isabel de Castilla y de Aragón escrita por su cronista, Hernando del Pulgar, cotexada con antiguos manuscritos y aumentado* (Valencia: 1780), 118–19.

5 Pulgar, *Crónica de los Señores Reyes Católicos*, 118–20. On the monument and its construction, see Rafael Domínguez Casas, "San Juan de los Reyes: Espacio funerario y aposento regio," *Boletín del Seminario de Estudios de Arte y Arqueología* 56 (1990): 364–80; José María de Azcárate, *Arte gótico en España* (Madrid: 1990), 117–23; Teresa Pérez Higuera, "En torno al proceso constructivo de San Juan de los Reyes en Toledo," *Anales de Historia del Arte* 7 (1997): 11–24; Ethan Matt Kavaler, *Renaissance Gothic: Architecture and the Arts in Northern Europe, 1470–1540* (New Haven: 2012), 82–84; Daniel Ortiz Pradas, *San Juan de los Reyes de Toledo: Historia, construcción y restauración de un monumento medieval* (Madrid: 2015); and José Miguel Merino de Cáceres, "Sobre la iglesia del convento de San Juan de los Reyes," *Boletín de la Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando* 118 (2016): 75–90.

6 Juan Guas was a favored architect of Isabel, earning the position of Master of the Royal Works. For an introduction to Juan Guas, see José María de Azcárate y Ristori, "Sobre el origen de Juan Guas," *Archivo Español de Arte* 22 (1950): 255–56; Lucía Lahoz, "Tres portadas hispanoflamencas en la Rioja alavesa," *Archivo Español de Arte* 68 (1995): 63–72; María López Díez, "Juan Guas en la Catedral de Segovia," *Archivo Español de Arte* 74 (2006): 299–306; and Kavaler, *Renaissance Gothic*, 82–84 and 122–25. On the late Gothic architectural style in Iberia, see Krista de Jonge, "Flandes y Castilla: La arquitectura en la época de los Reyes



FIGURE 5.1 Juan Guas, *San Juan de los Reyes* (exterior). 1477–1504. Toledo, Spain
IMAGE COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA COMMONS, QUERUBIN SALDAÑA
SÁNCHEZ / CC BY-SA ([HTTPS://CREATIVECOMMONS.ORG/LICENSES/BY-
SA/3.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0))

architecture is then subjugated to the monarchy by the visual dominance of royal insignia and personal emblems, such as the large escutcheons that dominate the choir (Figure 5.3).⁷

Católicos,” in *El arte en la corte de los Reyes Católicos*, ed. Fernando Checa Cremades and Bernardo García García (Madrid: 2005), 167–81; Kavalier, *Renaissance Gothic*, 78–84; and Miguel Ángel Zalama Rodríguez, “Arquitectura y estilo en la época de los Reyes Católicos,” in *Isabel la Católica: La magnificencia de un reinado* (Quinto Centenario de Isabel la Católica, 1504–2004), ed. Fernando Checa Cremades (Madrid: 2004), 127–40.

7 The widespread use of heraldry in architectural decoration led the late Gothic architectural style to be known also at the time as the “armorial manner” (Marías, *El siglo XVI*, 38). Juan Carlos Ruiz Souza has argued that the profusion of heraldry is derived conceptually from Andalusian façades (Juan Carlos Ruiz Souza, “Architectural Languages, Functions, and Spaces: The Crown of Castile and Al-Andalus,” *Medieval Encounters* 12 [2006]: 368–70).



FIGURE 5.2 Juan Guas, *San Juan de los Reyes* (interior). 1477–1504. Toledo, Spain
 IMAGE COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA COMMONS, BERNARD GAGNON / CC BY-SA
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The prominence of the decorative program in a drawing by Guas (Figure 5.4) indicates the importance of the sculptural decoration to the site.⁸ The decorative program also extends to the exterior. Sculpted kings-at-arms stand along the façade while holding yokes and bundles of arrows (Figure 5.5), the personal emblems of Isabel and Fernando.⁹ Their livery includes the newly incorporated pomegranate representing Granada, and the figures stand amidst the chains from the liberated Christian prisoners-of-war. Through their presentation, the chains are transformed from simple metalwork restraints into relics of the Iberian crusade. The ex-voto nature of the site, given in thanks to the Virgin for victory in battle, further marks the direct intervention of the divine into Isabel's life. Moreover, the decision to locate the monastery in close

8 Sergio Sanabria, "A Late Gothic Drawing of San Juan de los Reyes in Toledo at the Prado Museum in Madrid," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 51 (1992): 161–73; Merino de Cáceres, "Sobre la iglesia del convento de San Juan de los Reyes," 83–87.

9 Domínguez Casas, "San Juan de los Reyes," 366.



FIGURE 5.3 Juan Guas, *San Juan de los Reyes* (interior, nave). 1477–1504. Toledo, Spain
 IMAGE COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA COMMONS, SELBYMAY / CC BY-SA 3.0 ES
 ([HTTPS://CREATIVECOMMONS.ORG/LICENSES/BY-SA/3.0/ES/DEED.EN](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/es/deed.en))

proximity to the royal burials in the Cathedral of Toledo (including Isabel and Fernando's joint Trastámara ancestor Juan I) enables San Juan de los Reyes to function as a dynastic monument, emphasizing Isabel and Fernando's position as legitimate rulers. The connection would have been strengthened further if the site had been used for the burial of Isabel and Fernando, as was originally intended.¹⁰

Similar to her commissioning of San Juan de los Reyes, Isabel's patronage at the *Cartuja de Miraflores* near Burgos (Figures 5.6–5.9) emphasized her own position relative to the Trastámara dynasty. The Carthusian chapterhouse was founded in 1442 by Isabel's father, Juan II, as his royal burial site.¹¹ A devastating fire in 1452 followed by the death of the patron caused the project to remain incomplete when Isabel ascended the throne. By this date the site was also the burial place for her brother, Alonso, and her mother, Isabel of Portugal.

10 Domínguez Casas, "San Juan de los Reyes," 365–67.

11 For the history of this foundation, see Rafael Sánchez Domingo, *Privilegios Reales de la Cartuja de Miraflores: El Patrimonio Jurisdiccional de Burgos. Pleito contra el Hospital del Rey* (Burgos: 2004), 123–36; and Ronda Kasl, *The Making of Hispano-Flemish Style: Art, Commerce, and Politics in Fifteenth-Century Castile* (Turnhout: 2014), 101–17.



FIGURE 5.4 Juan Guas, *Interior of San Juan de los Reyes*. 1485–1490. Pen on parchment, 194 x 96 cm. Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid

IMAGE COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA COMMONS,
FAITHFUL REPRODUCTION OF A TWO-
DIMENSIONAL, PUBLIC DOMAIN WORK OF ART



FIGURE 5.5 Juan Guas, *San Juan de los Reyes* (exterior). 1477–1504. Toledo, Spain

IMAGE COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA COMMONS, PMRMAEYAERT / CC BY-SA ([HTTPS://CREATIVECOMMONS.ORG/LICENSES/BY-SA/3.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0))



FIGURE 5.6 Juan de Colonia and Simón de Colonia, *Cartuja de Miraflores* (exterior). 1454–1488. Miraflores

IMAGE COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA COMMONS, ECELAN 08:48, 1 DECEMBER 2007 (UTC) / CC BY-SA ([HTTP://CREATIVECOMMONS.ORG/LICENSES/BY-SA/3.0/](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/))

Isabel immediately designated funds for the project and patronized the site for the remainder of her life. The surviving visual program, articulated through stained glass, sculpture, and panel paintings, celebrates Juan II's reign and – by extension – Isabel's position as the legitimate ruler of Castile.

The architectural design of the Cartuja de Miraflores was initiated by Juan de Colonia and completed by his son, Simón de Colonia. The complex is constructed in a late Gothic vocabulary.¹² As work progressed, Isabel sponsored stained glass windows for the clerestory. According to a 1484 note in the

¹² Félix Sagredo Fernández, *La Cartuja de Miraflores* (Madrid: 1978); Joaquín Yarza Luaces, *Isabel la Católica: promotora artística* (León: 2005), 49–75; Kasl, *The Making of Hispano-Flemish Style*, 119–72; and Nicolás Menéndez González, “Redesigning Miraflores: Simón de Colonia's Architectural Perception,” in *Gothic Architecture in Spain: Invention and Imitation*, ed. Tom Nickson and Nicola Jennings (London: 2020), 177–95.



FIGURE 5.7 Juan de Colonia and Simón de Colonia, *Cartuja de Miraflores* (exterior, portal). 1454–1488. Miraflores

IMAGE COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA COMMONS, JOSÉ LUIS FILPO CABANA / CC BY-SA ([HTTPS://CREATIVECOMMONS.ORG/LICENSES/BY-SA/4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0))



FIGURE 5.8 Juan de Colonia and Simón de Colonia, *Cartuja de Miraflores* (interior, chapel). 1454–1488. Miraflores

IMAGE COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA COMMONS, TUROL JONES, UN ARTISTA DE COJONES FROM VILLANUEVA DEL CASCAJAL, REPÚBLICA INDEPENDIENTE DE MI CASA / CC BY ([HTTPS://CREATIVECOMMONS.ORG/LICENSES/BY/2.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0))



FIGURE 5.9 Juan de Colonia and Simón de Colonia, *Cartuja de Miraflores* (interior, choir). 1454–1488. Miraflores

IMAGE COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA COMMONS, JOSE LUIS FILPO CABANA / CC BY ([HTTPS://CREATIVECOMMONS.ORG/LICENSES/BY/3.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0))

monastic *Liber Becerro*, the Burgalese merchant Martín de Soria was charged with acquiring the windows in the Netherlands.¹³ He returned from the Low Countries with a passion series produced by Nicolas Rombouts.¹⁴ Three of the windows are prominently signed, publicly proclaiming their foreign origin and

¹³ Archive, Miraflores, cuaderno 375; quoted in Kasl, *The Making of Hispano-Flemish Style*, 21–23.

¹⁴ Jean Helbig, “Nicolas Rombouts, peintre-verrier et bourgeois de Bruxelles,” *Bulletin de la Société Royale d’Archéologie de Bruxelles* 1 (1939): 6–7; R. van Uytven, “Leuvense glasschilders, Klass Rombouts en Croy-Ramen te Aarschot en elders,” *Arca Lovaniensis* 2 (1973): 61–66; Kasl, *The Making of Hispano-Flemish Style*, 21.

the associated expense.¹⁵ Isabel's attention shifted next to the tombs of her parents (Figures 5.10–5.11) and her younger brother (Figure 5.12), as well as the elaborate high altarpiece (Figure 15.13).

All three works were carved by the Flemish immigrant sculptor Gil de Siloé; the high altarpiece was polychromed by the local painter Diego de la Cruz.¹⁶ The sculptures were presented alongside a number of painted altarpieces, including a polyptych dedicated to the Adoration of the Magi imported from the Low Countries, a polyptych dedicated to John the Baptist produced by the immigrant painter Juan de Flandes (Figures 5.14–5.15), and an image of the Annunciation created by the Spanish painter Pedro Berruguete (Figure 5.16).¹⁷

15 Ronda Kasl, "Long-Distance Relations: Castilian Patrons, Flemish Artists and Expatriate Agents in the Fifteenth Century," in *Jaarboek Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen*, ed. Paul Vandenbroecke (Antwerp: 2001), 89–92; Fernando Cortés Pizano, "Vidrieros de los Países Bajos en España," in *La Cartuja de Miraflores*, Cuadernos de Restauración de Iberdrola 13 (Madrid: 2007), 3:20–21; Jan van Damme, "Niclaes Rombouts y las vidrieras de la Cartuja de Miraflores," in *La Cartuja de Miraflores*, Cuadernos de Restauración de Iberdrola 13 (Madrid: 2007), 3:41–59; Kasl, *The Making of Hispano-Flemish Style*, 21.

16 Both tombs were completed in 1493; the altarpiece in 1499. On the altarpiece, see Joaquín Yarza Luaces, "El retablo mayor de la Cartuja de Miraflores," in *La Cartuja de Miraflores* (Madrid: 2007), 2:7–67; and Kasl, *The Making of Hispano-Flemish Style*, 153–67.

17 The polyptych dedicated to the Adoration of the Magi is attributed to the Master of the Legend of St. Catherine and is currently divided among the Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence; the Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels; the parish church of Binnengen, Switzerland; and a private collection in the Canary Islands. See Didier Martens, "Identification du 'tableau de l'Adoration des Mages', flamand, anciennement à la Chartreuse de Miraflores," *Annales d'Histoire de l'Art et d'Archéologie* (Université Libre de Bruxelles) 22 (2000): 65–84; Didier Martens, "Identificación del 'quadro' flamenco de la Adoración de los Reyes, antiguamente en la Cartuja de Miraflores," in *Actas del Congreso Internacional sobre Gil de Siloé y la escultura de su época*, ed. Joaquín Yarza Luaces and Alberto C. Ibáñez Pérez (Burgos: 2001), 75–79, 89. The polyptych dedicated to John the Baptist by Juan de Flandes is currently divided among the Cleveland Museum of Art; the Nardoni Muzej, Belgrade; the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, Geneva; the Museum Mayer van der Bergh, Antwerp; and the Abelló collection, Madrid. See Susan Urbach, "An *Ecce Agnus Dei* Attributed to Juan de Flandes: A Lost Panel from a Hypothetical Altarpiece," in *Jaarboek Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen*, ed. Vandenbroeck, 189–207; Yarza Luaces, *Isabel la Católica*, 73–74; Pilar Silva Maroto, *Juan de Flandes* (Madrid: 2006), 135–37; and Hans Nieuwdorp, "Kroonjuweel en oorlogsbuit: Het *Mirafloresretabel* van Juan de Flandes," in *Juan de Flandes en het Mirafloresretabel: Gesignaleerd en opgaspoord*, ed. Hans Nieuwdorp (Antwerp: 2010), 6–13. The *Annunciation* by Berruguete is still *in situ*. See Pilar Silva Maroto, *Pedro Berruguete* (Madrid: 1998), 134–35; and Sven Jakstrat, *Pedro Berruguete und das Altarbild in Spanien um 1500: zur Ästhetik und Semantik transkultureller Aneignungsprozesse* (Paderborn, Germany: 2019), 241–42.

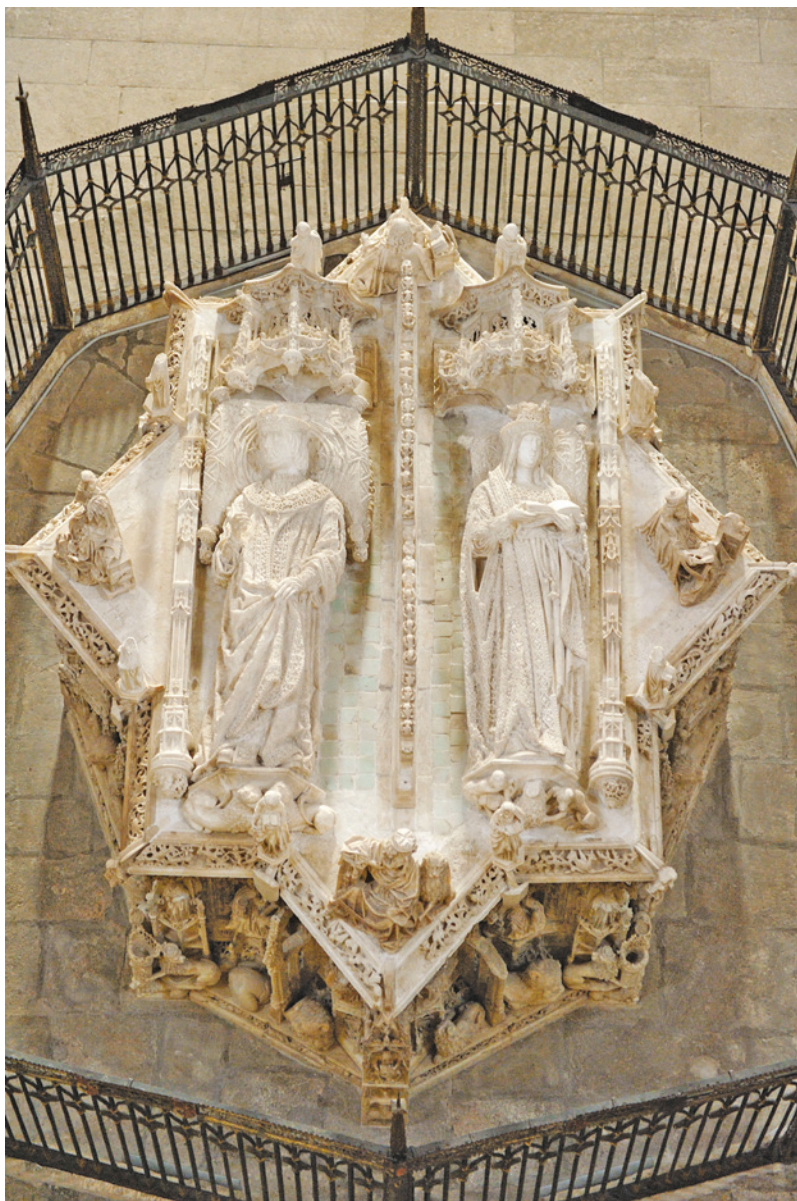


FIGURE 5.10 Gil de Siloé, *Tomb of Juan II and Isabel of Portugal* (viewed from above). 1489–1493. Alabaster. *Cartuja de Miraflores*, Miraflores
FIGURE COURTESY OF ALAMY



FIGURE 5.11 Gil de Siloé, *Tomb of Juan II and Isabel of Portugal* (viewed from side). 1489–1493. Alabaster. *Cartuja de Miraflores*, Miraflores

FIGURE COURTESY OF ALAMY

Collectively, the iconography of the paintings and sculptures emphasizes the regality and devotion of the royal family. Alonso appears kneeling at his *prie-dieu* dressed in jewel-encrusted robes.¹⁸ The effigies of Juan II and Isabel of Portugal are similarly presented, dressed in sumptuous robes of state and surrounded by elaborate tracery. The individual sculpted elements of the tomb of Juan II and Isabel of Portugal have been damaged, shifted from their original position, or removed completely; it is therefore impossible to reconstruct a nuanced interpretation of the iconography. However, the general subjects include the seven heavenly virtues, seven Old Testament kings, and saints (Figure 5.11). This combination creates a typology of virtuous kingship and good governance.¹⁹ The location of these elements, visually supporting the effigies of the deceased monarch and his wife, suggests a correlation between the biblical past and present. The king and queen appear a second time in the high altarpiece, kneeling in prayer in the lower corners. Rising above them is

18 Kasl, *The Making of Hispano-Flemish Style*, 122–25; Yarza Luaces, “Los sepulcros reales de la Cartuja de Miraflores,” 1:55–71.

19 Yarza Luaces, “Los sepulcros reales de la Cartuja de Miraflores,” 1:22–54; Kasl, *The Making of Hispano-Flemish Style*, 125–53.



FIGURE 5.12 Gil de Siloé, *Tomb of the Infante Alonso*. 1489–1493. Alabaster. *Cartuja de Miraflores*, Miraflores

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([HTTPS://CREATIVECOMMONS.ORG/LICENSES/BY-SA/4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0))



FIGURE 5.13 Gil de Siloé (sculpture) and Diego de la Cruz (polychromy), *Retablo Mayor*. 1469–1499. Polychromed wood. *Cartuja de Miraflores*, Miraflores

IMAGE COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA COMMONS, ROWANWINDWHISTLER / CC BY-SA ([HTTPS://CREATIVECOMMONS.ORG/LICENSES/BY-SA/3.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0))

a vegetal form from which sprout their individual coats of arms, evoking contemporary depictions of lineage.²⁰ Similar foliage undulates around Alonso,

²⁰ The most common subject was the Tree of Jesse, a depiction of which appeared on a tapestry Isabel owned. See Francisco Javier Sánchez Cantón, *Libros, tapices y cuadros que coleccionó Isabel la Católica* (Madrid: 1950), 112; and Guy Delmarcel, “La collection de tapisseries de la reine Isabelle de Castille (1451–1504): Quelques réflexions critiques,” in *El arte en la corte de los Reyes Católicos: Rutas artísticas a principios de la Edad Moderna*, ed. Fernando Checa Cremades and Bernardo García García (Madrid: 2005), 293–94.

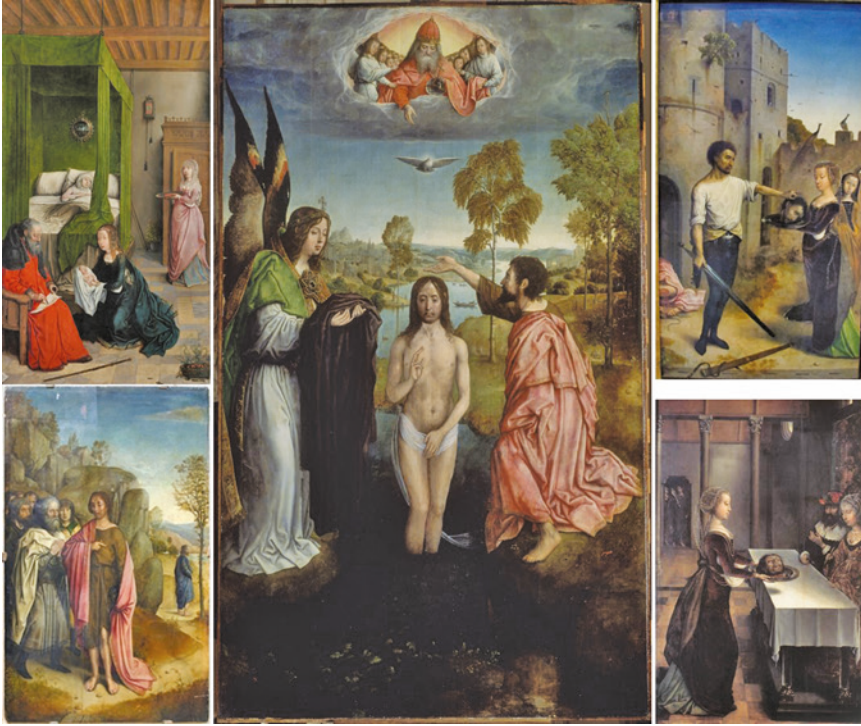


FIGURE 5.14 Photomontage reconstruction of Juan de Flandes, *Altarpiece of John the Baptist*. ca. 1500. Oil on panel

PANELS IN THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART, CLEVELAND; NATIONAL MUSEUM OF SERBIA, BELGRADE; MUSÉE D'ART ET D'HISTOIRE, GENEVA; MUSEUM MAYER VAN DER BERGH, ANTWERP; AND THE ABELLÓ COLLECTION, MADRID

who kneels before a background of stylized vegetation, subtly revealing the prince as the next branch of Juan II's family tree. The line of succession would then naturally continue to Isabel herself.

Though not represented at the *Cartuja de Miraflores*, Isabel is subtly invoked both visually and textually. On the exterior of the structure, the escutcheon of Juan II is held by a lion above the main portal. However, it is surmounted by Isabel's arms presented by an angel in the pediment. This message of a direct connection between Isabel and Juan II is then mirrored on the interior with a dedicatory inscription in the atrium which names Isabel as the patron, expresses her piety in ensuring the completion of the chapterhouse, and conveys the desire for the memory of those buried within to be remembered



FIGURE 5.15 Juan de Flandes, *The Birth and Naming of John the Baptist*. ca. 1500. Oil on panel, 88.4 × 49.9 cm
THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART, CLEVELAND.
JOHN L. SEVERANCE FUND



FIGURE 5.16 Pedro Berruguete, *Annunciation*. ca. 1500. Oil on panel, 108 × 145 cm. Carthusian Chapterhouse, Miraflores

IMAGE COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA COMMONS, FAITHFUL REPRODUCTION
OF A TWO-DIMENSIONAL, PUBLIC DOMAIN WORK OF ART

and blessed in perpetuity.²¹ The position of these references to the queen frames the visitor's experience of the site, subtly placing the celebration of Juan II and Alonso within an Isabelline context.²² As such, the space not only

21 The inscription as recorded by Sagredo Fernández reads in part: "The construction of the church, the construction of the tombs, the perfection of the monastery, and the enlargement of the endowment is owed to the piety and devotion of the Catholic Queen Isabel, the first of these most auspicious offspring, whose memory will be kept eternally by the Carthusians with blessing" ("Ecclesiae fabrica, sepulchrum structura, conventus perfectio, dotisq. amplificatio, debetur pietati et devotioni Reginae Catholicae Elisabeth, horum principum prolis felicissimae, quorum memoria apud hujus Cartusiae alumnos in perpetua erit benedictione") (Sagredo Fernández, *La Cartuja de Miraflores*, 27).

22 The *Cartuja de Miraflores* as an explicit articulation of Isabel's identity is expressed in two narrative accounts associated with the construction of the site. The *Libro Becerro* states that upon noticing the inclusion of Martín de Soria's heraldry within the stained glass windows after their arrival from Flanders, Isabel smashed the glass in a fit of rage (Arias de Miranda, *Apuntes históricos sobre la Cartuja de Miraflores de Burgos* [Burgos: 1843], 77–78). Similarly, Francisco Tarín y Juaneda states that Isabel expressed her displeasure upon seeing her own heraldry on the exterior of the chapterhouse, which also incorporated the coat of arms for Aragon, saying: "why are other arms than those of Castile and Leon permitted in my father's house?" ("¿Por qué se permiten en casa de mi padre

communicates the illustriousness of Juan II but also Isabel's position as his direct descendent and the legitimate ruler of Castile. This message also echoes through the painted altarpieces. Like the Old Testament Kings decorating the tomb of Juan II and Isabel of Portugal, the *Adoration of the Magi* altarpiece cast recent Trastámara rule within the framework of biblical precedence. While the subject of the Magi had long been popular for communicating the prerogatives and position of ruling elites across Europe, the altarpiece dedicated to John the Baptist may have borne a particularly Castilian connotation. In addition to being the name saint of Juan II, the inclusion of *The Birth and Naming of the Baptist*, a relatively uncommon scene in Castile, may have been a subtle evocation of the newest Trastámara, Isabel's son Juan.²³

Isabel's connection to the *Cartuja de Miraflores* was further emphasized through the creation of a nearly identical copy of the *Miraflores Altarpiece*, an object created by the Netherlandish artist Rogier van der Weyden, acquired by Isabel's father, donated to the chapterhouse, and copied by Isabel's court painter Juan de Flandes (Figures 5.17–5.19).²⁴

The copy was likely one of the objects that constituted Isabel's oratory as she traveled across the Peninsula. The special relationship of copy to original allowed the replicated image to function as a portable surrogate for Juan II, articulating Isabel's connection to the *Cartuja de Miraflores* and the reign of her predecessor. The copy was then donated to the queen's funerary chapel in Granada, which (like the *Cartuja de Miraflores*) was dedicated to St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist. The installation of the *Miraflores Altarpiece*

otras armas que las de Castilla y de León?”) (Francisco Tarín y Juaneda, *La real Cartuja de Miraflores: Su historia y descripción* [Burgos: 1896], 55–56). While these episodes are likely historical embellishments, they indicate the extent to which the imagery at the *Cartuja de Miraflores* has long been understood as an extension of the queen's royal identity.

23 Kasl, *The Making of Hispano-Flemish Style*, 167.

24 The literature on the *Miraflores Altarpiece* and the issue of its replication is extensive. For an overview, see Katrin Dyballa and Stephan Kemperdick, “A Look Back – Johannes Taubert and the Investigation of the *Miraflores Altarpiece*,” *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art* 11 (2019), DOI: 10.5092/jhna.2019.11.1.1. See also Lorne Campbell (ed.), *Rogier van der Weyden y los reinos de la Península Ibérica* (Madrid: 2015), cat. no. 3, pp. 88–97 and cat. no. 15, pp. 148–52; Lorne Campbell, “Rogier van der Weyden y los reinos ibéricos,” in *Rogier van der Weyden y los reinos de la Península Ibérica*, ed. Lorne Campbell (Madrid: 2015), 43, 50; S. Kemperdick, “The *Miraflores Triptych* and the Issue of Rogier van der Weyden's ‘Authenticated’ Paintings,” in *Rogier van der Weyden y España* (Actas del Congreso Internacional, Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado, mayo de 2015), ed. Lorne Campbell and José Juan Pérez Preciado (Madrid: 2016), 30–42; and Francisco de Paula Cañas Gálvez, “Juan II de Castilla y el Tríptico de Miraflores: marco espiritual, proyección política y propaganda regia en torno a una donación real (1445),” in *Rogier van der Weyden y España*, ed. Campbell and Pérez Preciado, 20–29.



FIGURE 5.17 Rogier van der Weyden, *Miraflores Altarpiece*. Before 1445. Oil on panel, 74 × 44.5 cm. Gemäldegalerie, Berlin
FIGURE COURTESY OF ALAMY



FIGURE 5.18 Photomontage reconstruction of Juan de Flandes, *Miraflores Altarpiece Copy*. ca. 1496. Oil on panel
PANELS IN THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK, AND THE CAPILLA REAL, GRANADA



FIGURE 5.19 Juan de Flandes, *Christ Appearing to his Mother*, ca. 1496. Oil on panel, 63.5 × 38.1 cm
METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK. THE BEQUEST OF
MICHAEL DREICER, 1921

replica transformed the Capilla Real into an alternate Burgos, uniting Isabel with her dynastic legacy in perpetuity.

2 Court Painters and Isabel's Painting Collection

Much like the architectural monuments, sculptures, and paintings discussed above, Isabel's collection of individual paintings demonstrates the queen's predilection for Northern European luxury goods. Some of these objects were imported directly from the Low Countries. Others were produced by artists in the direct employ of the crown, including immigrant artists as well as local Spanish painters working in the Hispano-Flemish style.²⁵ These artists provided Isabel ready access to high-quality objects specifically crafted to communicate the queen's prerogatives using traditional Iberian iconographies in a Northern European visual language.²⁶

The Spanish painter Francisco Chacón was the first artist to be employed by Isabel, coming under contract only one year after the treaty of Alcáçovas affirmed Isabel's position as the Queen of Castile.²⁷ The employment of a court artist immediately upon the establishment of her reign reveals Isabel's

25 For an overview of the many artists associated with Isabel and Fernando, see Rafael Domínguez Casas, *Arte y etiqueta de los Reyes Católicos: Artistas, residencias, jardines y bosques* (Madrid: 1993), 120–28; and José Manuel Pita Andrade, “Pintores coetáneos de los Reyes Católicos,” in *Isabel la Católica vista desde la Academia*, ed. Luis Suárez Fernández (Madrid: 2005), 243–74. Art historians have used the ahistorical term Hispano-Flemish to describe artworks produced on the Iberian Peninsula that demonstrate some awareness of and response to artistic developments not only of Flanders, but of other Northern European regions including France and Germany. For a general introduction to Hispano-Flemish painting, see Jonathan Brown, *Painting in Spain 1500–1700* (New Haven: 1998), 6–28; and Jeffrey Schrader, “Painting and Sculpture,” in *A Companion to the Spanish Renaissance*, ed. Hilaire Kallendorf (Leiden: 2018), 407–49, at 417–19. On the development of Hispano-Flemish painting in Castile, see Belozerskaya, *Rethinking the Renaissance*, 160–79; Didier Martens, “Les primitifs flamands et leur ‘réception’ dans la peinture castillane de la fin du Moyen Âge,” in *Late Gothic Painting in the Crown of Aragon and the Hispanic Kingdoms*, ed. Alberto Valesco and Francesc Fité (Leiden: 2018), 264–96; Pilar Silva Maroto, “On Hispano-Flemish Painting in the Kingdom of Castile,” in *Late Gothic Painting*, ed. Valesco and Fité, 297–340; and Lorne Campbell, “Bermejo's Knowledge of Netherlandish Art,” in *Bartolomé Bermejo: Master of the Spanish Renaissance*, ed. Letizia Treves (New Haven: 2019), 71–84.

26 Joaquín Yarza Luaces, *Los Reyes Católicos: Paisaje artístico de una monarquía* (Madrid: 1993), 391; Martens, “Identification du ‘tableau de l'Adoration des Mages,’” 59–92.

27 Manuel Gómez Moreno, “Francisco Chacón, pintor de la Reina Católica,” *Archivo Español de Arte* (1927): 359–60; Pita Andrade, “Pinturas y pintores de Isabel la Católica,” 24.



FIGURE 5.20 Francisco Chacón, *The Fifth Sorrow*. ca. 1492. Oil on panel, 197 × 160.5 cm. Museo de Bellas Artes de Granada, Granada

IMAGE COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA COMMONS, FAITHFUL REPRODUCTION
OF A TWO-DIMENSIONAL, PUBLIC DOMAIN WORK OF ART

awareness of the power and importance of visual culture in aggrandizing her position. Isabel also utilized objects created by Chacón to forge connections between herself and institutions in the newly conquered regions of Granada. Chacón accompanied Isabel to Granada, where he painted *The Fifth Sorrow* (Figure 5.20) for a hermitage dedicated to the sorrows of the Virgin.²⁸

28 Fernando Checa Cremades (ed.), *Isabel la Católica: La magnificencia de un reinado* (Quinto Centenario de Isabel la Católica, 1504–2004) (Madrid: 2004), cat. no. 60, pp. 284–86.

Although never named as an official court painter in the surviving documentation, Pedro Berruguete appears among the artists working on royal projects, including the Cartuja de Miraflores and the Real Monasterio de Santo Tomás in Ávila.²⁹ Moreover, Berruguete is one of only two Castilian painters whose works are identifiable in the queen's personal collection installed in the Capilla Real.³⁰ These works suggest that Berruguete benefited from Isabel's patronage even though he appears never to have been officially named a *pintor de la corte*. Berruguete's mature style, exemplified by the *Annunciation* from the Cartuja de Miraflores (Figure 5.16), reflects his training in the Hispano-Flemish style of his native Castile as well as the impact of his travels in the 1470s to Urbino, where he worked alongside Joos van Ghent.

In addition to Chacón and Berruguete, Isabel employed several painters of Northern European origin.³¹ Antonio Inglés arrived with the English delegation charged with negotiating the marriage between Catherine of Aragon and Arthur, Prince of Wales.³² Though payment to Antonio is recorded as compensation for portraits of the royal children, the relatively modest wages and brief sojourn when compared to Isabel's other court painters suggest that Antonio Inglés was primarily in the service of Henry VII, even if Isabel employed the painter herself while he resided in Castile.³³ In contrast, Michel Sittow became deeply entrenched in the Spanish court.³⁴ In 1496, he was joined by another

29 For an introduction to Pedro Berruguete's painting, see Pilar Silva Maroto (ed.), *Pedro Berruguete: El primer pintor renacentista de la Corona de Castilla* (Valladolid: 2003); Pilar Silva Maroto, "Pedro Berruguete en Castilla," in *Actas del Simposio Internacional "Pedro Berruguete y su entorno,"* ed. Rafael Martínez González (Palencia: 2004), 23–48; Yarza Luaces, *Isabel la Católica*, 34–46; and Jakstrat, *Pedro Berruguete und das Altarbild in Spanien um 1500*, 193–262.

30 Antonio Calvo Castellón, "Pinturas italianas y españolas," in *El libro de la Capilla Real*, ed. José Manuel Pita Andrade (Granada: 1994), 216–17; and Pita Andrade, "Pinturas y pintores de Isabel la Católica," 21–22.

31 The painter Melchior Alemán appears in the documentation but has yet to be connected with any surviving works (Domínguez Casas, *Arte y etiqueta de los Reyes Católicos*, 326). Felipe Morros was also in the queen's employ (Matthias Weniger, *Sittow, Morros, Juan de Flandes: Drei Maler aus dem Norden am Hof Isabellas der Katholischen* [Kiel: 2011], 414–19).

32 Pilar Silva Maroto, "La colección de pinturas de Isabel la Católica," in *Isabel la Católica: la magnificencia de un reinado*, ed. Checa Cremades, 118.

33 Pita Andrade, "Pinturas y pintores de Isabel la Católica," 24.

34 For an introduction to Sittow, see Weniger, *Sittow, Morros, Juan de Flandes*, 39–164; Greta Koppel, "The Riddle of Michel Sittow's Art," in *Michel Sittow: Estonian Painter at the Courts of Renaissance Europe*, ed. John Oliver Hand and Greta Koppel (New Haven: 2018), 1–8; and Matthias Weniger, "Michel Sittow: An Artist's Career," in *Michel Sittow: Estonian Painter*, ed. Hand and Koppel, 27–38.

Flemish-trained artist, Juan de Flandes.³⁵ He was quickly sent to the *Cartuja de Miraflores* where he began working on the *Altarpiece of John the Baptist* (Figures 5.14–5.15).

Reflecting Isabel's preference for court painters who worked in a Netherlandish style, the queen's collection of paintings confirms her fondness for Northern European styled goods. Isabel was an avid collector: inventories taken just before and just after her death include around 400 separate paintings on linen, panel, and loose parchment.³⁶ The collection ranged from small devotional pieces to large altarpieces, along with a cabinet containing the panels of the *Retablo de Isabel* (Figures 5.21–5.22).³⁷

Many of the entries simply list the general subject matter and the support, for example: “a panel of Our Lady with two angels who place the crown.”³⁸ Because the purpose of the inventories was the settling of the queen's estate,

35 On Juan de Flandes, see Silva Maroto, *Juan de Flandes*; Maryan W. Ainsworth, “Juan de Flandes, Chameleon Painter,” in *Invention: Northern Renaissance Studies in Honor of Molly Faries*, ed. Julien Chapuis (Belgium: 2008), 105–21; Weniger, *Sittow, Morros, Juan de Flandes*, 165–392; Silva Maroto, “On Hispano-Flemish Painting in the Kingdom of Castile,” 331–40; and Jessica Weiss, “Juan de Flandes and His Financial Success in Castile,” *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art* 11 (2019), DOI: 10.5092/jhna.2019.11.1.2.

36 Archivo General de Simancas, Patronato Real, Capitulaciones con la Casa de Austria, Leg. 1; Archivo General de Simancas, Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas, 1ª época, leg. 3, fol. 9; leg. 81; leg. 156; leg. 178, fol. 29r; leg. 186; leg. 189; leg. 192, fols 12r, 20r, 31r, 68r-69v, 70r, 75r, 85; leg. 1213, pliegos 75–78 (published in Sánchez Cantón, *Libros, tapices y cuadros*, 165–89). My analysis of Isabel's painting collection is based upon interpretation of the documents by Sánchez Cantón and Pita Andrade. See Sánchez Cantón, *Libros, tapices y cuadros*, 151–64; and Pita Andrade, “Pinturas y pintores de Isabel la Católica,” 13–72. Many of the 69 paintings set aside for installation in the queen's funerary chapel remain in the collection of the Capilla Real in Granada. See Elisa Bermejo, “Las tablas flamencas,” in *El libro de la Capilla Real*, ed. José Manuel Pita Andrade (Granada: 1994), 177–213; Calvo Castellón, “Pinturas italianas y españolas,” 215–29; and Yarza Luaces, *Isabel la Católica*, 109–30.

37 The 47 panels that constitute the *Retablo de Isabel* include images attributed to both Juan de Flandes and Michel Sittow. Matthias Weniger has argued that Felipe Morros also participated in the project (Weniger, *Sittow, Morros, Juan de Flandes*, 393–400). The paintings were inventoried independently (Archivo General de Simancas, Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas, 1ª época, leg. 192, fol. 20r; published in Chiyo Ishikawa, *The Retablo de Isabel la Católica by Juan de Flandes and Michel Sittow* [Turnhout: 2004], 167–68; see also Silva Maroto, *Juan de Flandes*, 469–70). On the project of the *Retablo de Isabel*, see Ishikawa, *The Retablo de Isabel la Católica*, 57–64; Silva Maroto, *Juan de Flandes*, 167–286; Weniger, *Sittow, Morros, Juan de Flandes*, 25–38; and Jessica Weiss, “Relics of *Los Reyes Católicos*: The *Retablo de Isabel* and Spanish-Habsburg Family Heirlooms,” in *Imagery and Ingenuity in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Honor of Jeffrey Chipps Smith*, ed. Alisa M. Carlson, Catharine Ingersoll, and Jessica Weiss (Turnhout: 2018), 165–69.

38 “vna tabla de nuestra señora con dos anjeles que le pone la corona” (Sánchez Cantón, *Libros, tapices y cuadros*, 173; Pita Andrade, “Pinturas y pintores de Isabel la Católica,” 37).



FIGURE 5.21 Juan de Flandes, *The Marriage Feast at Cana* from the *Retablo de Isabel*, ca. 1500–1504. Oil on panel, 21 × 15.9 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York THE JACK AND BELLE LINSKY COLLECTION, 1982



FIGURE 5.22 Juan de Flandes, *The Temptation of Christ* from the *Retablo de Isabel*. ca. 1500–1504. Oil on panel, 21 × 15.5 cm. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. ALISA MELLON BRUCE FUND 1967.7.1.

some of the entries also include notations as to the price assessed and the buyer. Taken collectively, the documents indicate the scale, scope, and general trends of Isabel's painting collection. The vast majority were devotional in nature, though Isabel also acquired a small number of portraits and cityscapes.

In some instances, the details of the description or the survival of the object itself allow for a more nuanced interpretation of the collection. A small number of entries attribute works to a specific artist. One is listed as "another panel smaller than the above, that has in the middle a naked woman with long hair, hands together, and in the bottom in a golden fence an inscription in black letters which says Jeronimus [Bosch] [...]."³⁹ Another is "a devotional panel that was painted by Michel [Sittow] from that of the archbishop of Granada."⁴⁰ An image of the city of Málaga is designated as painted by Diego Sánchez and Antón Sánchez of Guadalupe.⁴¹ The survival of many of Isabel's most cherished paintings in the Capilla Real of Granada has led to the attribution of 19 additional paintings: two are attributed to Italian artists, Sandro Botticelli and Pietro Perugino; two are attributed to Iberian artists, Pedro Berruguete and Bartolomé Bermejo; and 15 are attributed to Netherlandish artists, including the circle of Hieronymus Bosch, Dirk Bouts, and Hans Memling.⁴² The largest proportion of identifiable panels are paintings composing the *Retablo de Isabel*, attributed to Juan de Flandes and Michel Sittow (Figures 5.21–5.22). In addition to the works that can be attributed to a specific artist, many other descriptions indicate a region of origin. Eight objects are described as "Greek,"

39 "otra tabla mas pequeña que la susodicha que tiene en el medio una muger desnuda con unos cabellos largos las manos juntas y en lo baxo en el çerco dorado un letrero de letras negras que dize jeronimus" (Sánchez Cantón, *Libros, tapices y cuadros*, 182; Pita Andrade, "Pinturas y pintores de Isabel la Católica," 41). The description suggests the subject is the penitent Magdalene.

40 "Otras tablas de devoción que pintó Michel por las del Arzobispo de Granada" (Sánchez Cantón, *Libros, tapices y cuadros*, 169; Pita Andrade, "Pinturas y pintores de Isabel la Católica," 36). This work is likely a copy.

41 "[...] by the release of the Bishop of Ávila, by Diego Sánchez and Antón Sánchez of Guadalupe, painters, from the royal painting of Málaga made by your command [...]" ("por libramiento del obispo de Auila, dí a Diego Sánchez e Antón Sánchez de Guadalupe, pintores, por los días que estouieron en el real pintando Málaga por mandado de Su Alteza") (Eloy Benito Ruano, *El libro del limosnero de Isabel la Católica* [Madrid: 2004], no. 35; Pita Andrade, "Pinturas y pintores de Isabel la Católica," 68).

42 Roger van Schoute, *La Chapelle Royale de Grenade*, Les primitifs flamands 1: Corpus de la peinture des anciens Pays-Bas méridionaux au quinzième siècle 6 (Brussels: 1963); Bermejo, "Las tablas flamencas," 177–213; Calvo Castellón, "Pinturas italianas y españolas," 215–29.

indicating Byzantine icons.⁴³ Sixty-four objects are described as diptychs or triptychs. These formats were closely associated with Northern European painting traditions and were likely imported from the Low Countries.⁴⁴

Collectively, 94 of the paintings in Isabel's collection can likely be identified with a specific European region; of these, 85 per cent were Netherlandish. The dominance of Netherlandish objects within the collection indicates a strong personal preference on the part of Isabel. Moreover, the two highest-valued painting projects assessed in Isabel's collection were the *Retablo de Isabel* and the *Triptych of the Passion*, currently in the Capilla Real by the Netherlandish painter Dirk Bouts.⁴⁵ The extremely high monetary values assigned to these objects, and the Bouts triptych in particular, were certainly due to the exceptional quality of the works as well as their Netherlandish aesthetic and foreign associations. Six of the identifiably Netherlandish paintings are also described in the inventories as including the arms of Isabel or members of her immediate family.⁴⁶ The inclusion of heraldry in these works would have created a conceptual connection between this foreign material culture and the Castilian queen, her royal household, and the prerogatives of her reign.

43 One of these icons, the two-part *Virgin and Child with the Entombment of St. Catherine*, is located in the Capilla Real. It is described in the inventories as "another two panels darkened like those of Greece, that one is of Our Lady with her son put in a cloud and around four scenes and in the other a tomb that has a queen with two angels" ("Otras dos tablas encharneladas de las de greçia que en la vna esta nuestra señora con su hijo puesta en vna nuve e alderredor quatro ymagenes e en la otra vn sepulcro con dos angeles que tiene vna Reyna") (Sánchez Cantón, *Libros, tapices y cuadros*, 177; Pita Andrade, "Pinturas y pintores de Isabel la Católica," 56). On Isabel's icons, see Kim Woods, "Byzantine Icons in the Netherlands, Bohemia and Spain during the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries," in *Byzantine Art and Renaissance Europe*, ed. Angeliki Lymberopoulou and Rembrandt Duits (Burlington: 2013), 152–53.

44 Justin E.A. Kroesen, *Staging the Liturgy: The Medieval Altarpiece in the Iberian Peninsula*, Liturgia Condenda (Leuven: 2009), 92–98.

45 The individual panels of the *Retablo de Isabel* ranged from 937.5 *maravedies* to 2,250 *maravedies* (Ishikawa, *The Retablo de Isabel la Católica*, 25–27; Silva Maroto, *Juan de Flandes*, 469–70). In aggregate, the *Retablo de Isabel* was valued at 76,875 *maravedies* and constituted 16.5 per cent of the total value of Isabel's collection (Weiss, "Juan de Flandes and His Financial Success in Castile," 5). The *Triptych of the Passion* was valued at 282,860 *maravedies* and constituted approximately 61 per cent of the total value of the collection. See José María de Azcárate, *Datos histórico-artísticos de fines del siglo xv y principios del siglo xvi*, Documentos para la Historia del Arte en España (Zaragoza: 1982), 128; Silva Maroto, "La colección de pinturas de Isabel la Católica," n. 10; and Pita Andrade, "Pinturas y pintores de Isabel la Católica," 57.

46 Sánchez Cantón, *Libros, tapices y cuadros*, 167; Pita Andrade, "Pinturas y pintores de Isabel la Católica," 42.

3 Isabel's Tapestry Collection

In addition to paintings, Isabel was also an active collector of tapestries, accumulating a collection of over 300 weavings.⁴⁷ The tapestries were acquired via the receipt of diplomatic gifts, direct commissions, and purchases on the open market. Isabel's appetite for these expensive luxury goods was so voracious that it necessitated increasing the annual royal household budget between 1498 and 1503.⁴⁸ The majority of the tapestries represented devotional subjects, including a "large wool and silk tapestry of the *Seven Sacraments* [...]"⁴⁹ Some are small tapestries to serve as altar canopies, such as "another small tapestry with a crucifix and Our Lady and St. John with four coats of arms of Castile

47 Knowledge of Isabel's tapestry collection is predominantly based upon inventories made in preparation for the sale held at Toro in the wake of the queen's death (Archivo General de Simancas, Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas, 1ª época, leg. 81, fol. 1; 178, fol. 29, 69; leg. 186; leg. 189; leg. 192, fol. 12; leg. 198, fol. 14; published in Sánchez Cantón, *Libros, tapices y cuadros*, 114–50). Three additional texts provide detailed accounts of objects that were not sold but instead passed to Margaret of Austria and Isabel's daughter Joanna. An inventory was created in Granada in 1499 to account for the belongings of Princess Margaret (Archivo General de Simancas, Patronato Real, Capitulaciones de la Casa de Austria, leg. 1 no. 7; published by Rudolf Beer, "Acten, Regesten und Inventare aus dem Archivo General zu Simancas," in *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses* (Vienna: 1891), cx–cxii; see also Sánchez Cantón, *Libros, tapices y cuadros*, 108–09). Gaspar de Gricio, secretary to the Catholic Monarchs, created a second inventory of the tapestries of the Alcázar of Segovia in 1503 (Archivo General de Simancas, Patronato Real, leg. 30–6; published in José Ferrandis, *Inventarios reales [Juan 11 a Juana la Loca]* [Madrid: 1943], 69–169; and Sánchez Cantón, *Libros, tapices y cuadros*, 109–14. This last document was produced by Diego and Alonso de Ribera, chamberlains to Joanna from 1509–1555 (Archivo General de Simancas, Contaduría Mayor, 1ª época, leg. 1213 cv; published in Ferrandis, *Inventarios reales*, 344–52). Sánchez Cantón organized this material and incorporated tapestries from the inventories of Isabel's lady-in-waiting, Violante de Albién, and chamberlain, Sancho de Paredes, both of whom were entrusted with tapestries from Isabel's personal collection. For an analysis of Isabel's tapestry collection, see Sánchez Cantón, *Libros, tapices y cuadros*, 89–105; Paulina Junquera de Vega and Concha Herrero Carretero, *Catálogo de tapices del Patrimonio Nacional*, vol. 1: *Siglo XVI* (Madrid: 1986); Joaquín Yarza Luaces, "Reinas promotoras, colecciones dispersas," in *A la manera de Flandes: Tapices ricos de la Corona de España*, ed. Concha Herrero Carretero, Lourdes de Luis Serra, and Joaquín Yarza Luaces (Madrid: 2001), 11–32; Concha Herrero Carretero, *Tapices de Isabel la Católica: Origen de la colección real española* (Madrid: 2004); and Delmarcel, "La collection de tapisseries de la reine Isabelle de Castille," 287–303.

48 J. Martínez Millán, *La corte de Carlos V*, 5 vols (Madrid: 2000), 1:15.

49 "Otro paño grande de lana e seda que es de los siete sacramentos" (Ferrandis, *Inventarios reales*, 144).



FIGURE 5.23 *Triumph of Fame*. ca. 1502–1504. Wool and silk. 359 × 335 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
PURCHASE, THE ANNENBERG FOUNDATION GIFT, 1998

and Leon and Aragon [...] with much silk.”⁵⁰ A number of tapestries depicted secular or mythological content, including Hercules, Romulus and Remus, and the *Triumph of Fame* (Figure 5.23), derived from Petrarch’s allegorical poem *I Trionfi*.⁵¹

50 “Otro paño pequeño con vn crucifixo y nuestra señora e sant Juan tiene quatro escudos de las armas de castilla e leon e aragon [...] tiene mucha seda” (Ferrandis, *Inventarios reales*, 143).

51 An entry nearly identical to the *Triumph of Fame* appears in the 1504 inventory: “A weaving from Arras with figures, that has in the middle an angel who has blue clothing and the

Similar to the painting collection, the tapestry collection was dominated by Northern European objects. Netherlandish towns including Arras, Tournai, and Brussels were major centers of tapestry production, and many of the inventory entries reflect this reality by describing the objects as Arras cloth.⁵² Surviving objects, such as the *Triumph of Fame*, coincide with the standards of production and stylistic features of these weaving centers.⁵³ The impact of Netherlandish production extended to include imagery that visually referenced Netherlandish paintings. For example, one of the tapestries purchased by Isabel from the Flemish merchant Mathias Guerlas at Medina del Campo in January of 1504 is described as:

a rich devotional tapestry of gold and silk and wool, with Our Lord at the top [...] with all the mysteries of the Passion, and beneath him St. Gregory dressed giving mass, and on the right, behind him, a deacon with a green alb lifting St. Gregory's chasuble, and in front of him a cardinal holding the mitre of St. Gregory, and in the other part, on the left side, a cardinal

front with a border encrusted in jewels and in the right hand a globe which has a cross and the other hand settled upon a book and above the head some yellow letters that say Fame, above them an inscription that begins *veterun synata e faman* etc. with a bare naked leg and between the feet some yellow letters which say Lachesys and at the feet of the one dressed in blue some letters that say Cloto and on top of this weaving an old woman with wings and below the left hand a hell mouth with two-headed Cerberus, which has a width of four *varas* and which hangs four *varas* and a *sesma* long" ("Un paño de Ras de figuras que tiene en el medio un angel que tiene una vestidura azul y la delantera della bordada de pedreria y en la mano derecha un mundo que tiene una cruz en la otra mano asentada sobre un libro y encima de la cabeça vnas letras amarillas que dizen Fama y ençima dellas un Rotulo que comienza veterun synata e faman etc" e tiene la una pierna descubierta desnuda y entre los pies vnas letras amarillas dizen Lachesys y a los pies del una vestidura azul que tiene unas letras que dizen Cloto y en lo alto del dicho paño vna mujer vieja con vnas alas e debaxo della a la mano yzquierda vna boca del ynfierno con dos cabeças de Syerpes que tiene de largo quatro varas e de cayda quatro varas e sesma largas") (Sánchez Cantón, *Libros, tapices y cuadros*, 131). While it is possible that the object currently in the Metropolitan Museum of Art collection is the same object mentioned in the inventory, gaps in the provenance make it impossible to establish her ownership of this specific weaving definitively. On Isabel's ownership of the cycle more generally, see Sandra Van Riet and An Volckaert, *Tapisseries flamandes du xvi siècle / Flemish Tapestries of the Sixteenth Century* (Antwerp: 1996), 6–9; Delmarcel, "La collection de tapisseries de la reine Isabelle de Castille," 295–96.

52 The reference to *paño de Ras* refers to Arras. On this nomenclature, see Thomas Campbell, *Tapestry in the Renaissance: Art and Magnificence* (New York: 2002), 31.

53 The *Triumph of Fame* was likely produced in or around Brussels ("Recent Acquisitions, A Selection: 1998–1999," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 57 [1999]: 24).

with another deacon with a cross in hand, and behind him a bishop and two pages.⁵⁴

The description suggests that the no-longer-extant tapestry may have been based on the painting by Robert Campin.⁵⁵ This connection is even more plausible when one considers that the tapestry was acquired from a Flemish merchant who likely obtained the object in the Low Countries before bringing the textile to Castile for sale at the Medina del Campo fair. The tapestry of the *Mass of St. Gregory* was ostensibly a favored object, as a second tapestry of this subject from Peter van Aelst (Figure 5.24) was given to Isabel by her daughter, Joanna of Castile.⁵⁶

Similar to the stained glass windows by Rombouts installed at the *Cartuja de Miraflores*, the importance of the foreign production of the *Mass of St. Gregory* tapestry is suggested by the inclusion of the word “Brussels” woven into the border of St. Gregory’s alb. The prominent incorporation of the object’s place of origin emphasized its foreign production and associated cost. By extension, the object communicated Isabel’s wealth, sophisticated taste, and international connections.

4 The Function of Art at the Isabelline Court

The amassing of Netherlandish tapestries when considered alongside Isabel’s painting collection, employment of court painters, and architectural patronage reveals a specific aesthetic sensibility.⁵⁷ In all of these areas, Isabel

54 “Vn paño rico de devoçion de oro e Seda e lana que tiene en lo alto nuestro Señor [...] con todos los misterios de la pasion e debaxo del San Gregorio vestido diziendo Misa e a la parte derecha detras del vn diacono con vn alva verde que alça la casulla de San gregorio con la mano e delante del esta vn cardenal que tiene la mitra de San gregorio en la mano e de la otra parte a la mano yzquierda vn Cardenal con otro diacono con vna cruz en la mano e detras del un obispo e dos pajes” (Sánchez Cantón, *Libros, tapices y cuadros*, 117–18).

55 Didier Martens, “Rayonnement d’un modèle: Emprunts méconnus à la ‘Messe de Saint Grégoire’ flémallienne dans la peinture et la tapisserie bruxelloises,” *Annales d’histoire de l’art et d’archéologie* 23 (2001): 25–59.

56 Campbell, *Tapestry in the Renaissance*, 146–50; Herrero Carretero, *Tapices de Isabel la Católica*, 40–41; Delmarcel, “La collection de tapisseries de la reine Isabelle de Castille,” 291–92.

57 On Isabel’s aesthetics, see Joaquín Yarza Luaces, “Gusto y promotor en la época de los Reyes Católicos,” *Ephialte. Lecturas de Historia del Arte* 3 (1992): 51–70; Yarza Luaces, *Los Reyes Católicos*, 359–87; Pilar Silva Maroto, “Pintura y sociedad en Castilla en época de los Reyes Católicos,” in *Imágenes y promotores en el arte medieval: Miscelánea en homenaje*



FIGURE 5.24 Colyn de Coter (design), Pieter van Aelst or workshop (weaver), *Mass of St. Gregory*. ca. 1502–1504. Wool, silk, and silver-and gilt-metal wrapped thread. 342 × 407 cm. Patrimonio Nacional, Palacio Real de Madrid, Madrid
IMAGE COURTESY OF M.C. ESTEBAN/IBERFOTO/MARY EVANS

demonstrated a marked preference for objects and monuments constructed in either a Northern European or Hispano-Flemish stylistic vocabulary.⁵⁸ It is

a Joaquín Yarza Luaces, ed. M. Luisa Melero (Barcelona: 2001), 619–31; Joaquín Yarza Luaces, “Isabel la Católica, coleccionista: ¿sensibilidad esética o devoción?,” in *Arte e cultura en la época de Isabel la Católica* (ponencias presentados al III simposio sobre el reinado de Isabel la Católica), ed. Julio Valdeón Barúque (Valladolid: 2003), 223–38, 43–44; Yarza Luaces, *Isabel la Católica*, 77–101; and Jessica Weiss, “Isabel of Castile, Flemish Aesthetics, and Identity Construction in the Works of Juan de Flandes” (PhD dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 2014), 81–109.

⁵⁸ Isabel’s aesthetic preference for Flemish art and architecture is so dominant that in 1912 Émile Betraux described the Hispano-Flemish art and architecture from this period as the “Isabelline Style” (Émile Betraux, *La Renaissance en Espagne et Portugal*, vol. 4–5 of *Histoire de l’art depuis les premiers temps chrétiens jusqu’à nos jours* [Paris: 1912], 5:821–27); see also José María de Azcárate, “Sentido y significación de la arquitectura hispano-flamenca en la corte de Isabel la Católica,” *Boletín del Seminario de Estudios de Arte y*

important to note that Isabel was not the first Castilian monarch to privilege Northern European material culture, nor the last. The interest in the use of French and Netherlandish architectural forms and luxury goods to communicate an elevated social status has a long history in Iberia. Therefore, Isabel's patronage and collecting activities should be understood as participating in a long tradition of artistic practice.⁵⁹ What differentiated Isabel from her Castilian predecessors was the scope of her artistic patronage and her ability to leverage her magnificence into an international reputation.

The paintings and tapestries were employed alongside elaborate dress, jewels, metalwork, and other objects from Isabel's collection in visual displays and courtly events to construct an aura of sophistication and magnificence.⁶⁰ For example, when the queen traveled to Granada to inspect the troops during the siege of Granada, she resided in silk tents and provided the highest-ranking courtiers with sumptuous feasts served on bejeweled, gold-plated dishes.⁶¹ Isabel's sponsorship of elaborate visual displays would have been understood by her contemporaries as an emulation of the courtly rituals and luxurious trappings of the Burgundian dukes.⁶² The Burgundian court was famed for its banquets, feasts, jousts, and royal receptions which occurred within elaborate – and exorbitantly expensive – multi-sensory environments of magnificence.⁶³ Contemporary witnesses marveled at the conspicuous consumption

Arqueología 37 (1971): 201–23. The use of this term, including its Orientalizing connotations, has been challenged (Yarza Luaces, "Isabel la Católica, coleccionista," 219–22; Roberto González Ramos, "The Hispano-Islamisms of Juan Guas: The Fabrication of a Historiographical Stereotype," *Mirabilia/Ars* 2 [2015]: 104–39).

59 Yarza Luaces, *Isabel la Católica*, 77–83; Weiss, "Isabel of Castile, Flemish Aesthetics, and Identity Construction in the Works of Juan de Flandes," 63–70.

60 On Isabel's metalwork, see Jesús Sénz de Miera, "Instrumentos suntuarios para una nueva dignidad real: Útiles y objetos preciosos pertenecientes a Isabel I de Castilla," in *Isabel la Católica: La magnificencia de un reinado*, ed. Checa Cremades, 155–68; Letizia Arbeteta Mira, "La corona rica y otras joyas de estado de la reina Isabel I," in *ibid.*, 169–86; and Miguel Ángel Zalama Rodríguez, "Isabel la Católica y la joyas: La custodia de la catedral de Toledo," in *El arte en la Corte de los Reyes Católicos: Rutas artísticas a principios de la Edad Moderna*, ed. Fernando Checa Cremades and Bernardo García García (Madrid: 2005), 331–53.

61 A. Bernáldez, *Historia de los Reyes Católicos d. Fernando y da. Isabel: Crónica inédita del siglo xv* (Granada: 1856), 165.

62 Belozerskaya, *Rethinking the Renaissance*, 160–61.

63 Stephen Fliegel, Sophie Jugie, and Virginie Barthélémy (eds.), *Art from the Court of Burgundy: The Patronage of Philip the Bold and John the Fearless, 1364–1419* (Dijon: 2004); Belozerskaya, *Rethinking the Renaissance*, 47–75; Wim Blockmans, "The Splendor of Burgundy: For Whom?" in *Staging the Court of Burgundy* (Proceedings of the Conference "The Splendour of Burgundy"), ed. Wim Blockmans et al. (London: 2013), 17–24.

of the displays littered with heraldry, personal emblems, and mythological references. As these displays were constructed by artists in the Low Countries, the Netherlandish visual style – especially in the form of metalwork, tapestries and other rich textiles, and paintings – came to be associated with Burgundian magnificence.⁶⁴

Isabel was certainly aware of the Burgundian reputation. Like many of her contemporaries, she modeled her court on their luxurious displays (in terms of both materials and style) in order to position herself, her family, her court, and her kingdom as internationally sophisticated within a European milieu.⁶⁵ Fernando's employment of the Netherlandish Miguel de Porthi as the king-at-arms, responsible for the organization of tournaments and court entertainments, would have furthered this endeavor.⁶⁶ The connection between the court of Castile and Northern European models was also articulated through the language of fashion, both in the expense of personal adornment and in the style of dress.⁶⁷ When Isabel and Fernando received the English ambassadors at La Mota, Isabel and Fernando were seated beneath a cloth-of-gold and tapestry canopy woven with the arms of Castile and Aragon.⁶⁸ Isabel's cloth-of-gold dress, cut in the "local style," was visible through a slashed black velvet capelet set with precious stones. She wore additional jewels in the form of a large gold and enameled necklace and ribbons studded with diamonds, pearls, rubies, and other gems.⁶⁹ The next day Fernando appeared dressed in an ermine-lined golden cloak with a large collar "in the German style," while Prince Juan wore a hat "in the French style." The members of the court were all

64 Belozerskaya, *Rethinking the Renaissance*, 76–130; Till-Hilger Borchert and Anne van Oosterwijk, "Introduction," in *Staging the Court of Burgundy*, ed. Blockmans and Borchert, 11.

65 Yarza Luaces, *Los Reyes Católicos*, 102–09; Belozerskaya, *Rethinking the Renaissance*, 160–79; Rafael Domínguez Casas, "La corte y la imagen real," in *Los Reyes Católicos y la monarquía de España* (Museo del Siglo XIX, Valencia, septiembre de 2004), ed. Lucía Vallejo (Valencia: 2004), 75–96; Weiss, "Isabel of Castile, Flemish Aesthetics, and Identity Construction in the Works of Juan de Flandes," 97–114. On European emulation of Burgundian magnificence, see Belozerskaya, *Rethinking the Renaissance*, 146–220.

66 Knighton, "Northern Influence on Cultural Developments in the Iberian Peninsula," 227.

67 Miguel Ángel Zalama Rodríguez, "Oro, perlas, brocados ... La ostentación en el vestir en la corte de los Reyes Católicos," *Revista de Estudios Colombinos* 8 (2012): 13–22.

68 This event is recorded in Roger Machado, *Journals of Roger Machado* (London: 1858), 170–84. See also Knighton, "Northern Influence on Cultural Developments in the Iberian Peninsula," 222–25.

69 The English emissaries estimated that the jewels worn by Isabel were valued at approximately 200,000 crowns. The inclusion of this detail within their diplomatic notes indicates not only that they were awestruck by Isabel's ensemble but also that they possessed the ability to assess the value of courtly displays.

similarly dressed “in the French style, as nearly as they could.” The expense of this courtly display produced a direct impact on the English ambassadors, who sent letters to Henry VII of England relaying the suitability of a match between Prince Arthur and Catherine of Aragon.

Isabel’s tapestry collection in particular was used in courtly ceremonies to assert the queen’s sovereignty and sophistication visually. Weavings such as the *Triumph of Fame* (Figure 5.23) not only were produced in the Low Countries but also reflect themes popular at the Burgundian court and across Europe.⁷⁰ However, whereas the personification of Fame is usually surrounded by important figures from history, in Isabel’s tapestry Fame is surrounded by writers who recorded the deeds of these illustrious individuals, emphasizing the importance of the written word in immortalization. Additionally, the cross-topped orb of the world as well as the hell’s mouth (located just behind the figure of Fame) emphasize the Christological aspects of this humanistic subject. The subject presented in an expensive medium would have communicated not only Isabel’s wealth and sophisticated taste but also essential aspects of her self-fashioning: her erudition and devotion.

Like her European counterparts, Isabel utilized her tapestry collection in order to construct an environment appropriate for royal ceremony. For example, when Isabel organized Fernando’s entrance into the city of Segovia in 1475, he and his entourage processed down streets hung with tapestries and banners before being greeted publicly by Isabel with an embrace.⁷¹ The portability of the artworks and ephemeral nature of courtly display would have enabled the manipulation and nuance of the communicative message by altering the subjects or the order of their presentation. While surviving documentation does not allow for the reconstruction of specific tapestries or even specific subjects within court ceremonies, presumably the content of the tapestries was carefully considered; and the variety of subjects within Isabel’s collection – including devotional and mythological subjects – would have enabled complex, multivalent messages. Some of these figures, such as King Solomon or Alexander the Great, would have associated the reigning monarchs with established *exempla*. Other non-narrative depictions of rulers, such as “another panel of wool and famed silk that has in the middle a queen dressed in blue with a sword in one hand and in the other a sculpture which has a crossbow,” may have evoked an

70 The subject of the Triumphs series was first woven for Philip the Bold in 1399 (Guy Delmarcel, *La tapisserie flamande du xve au xviii^e siècle* [Tielt: 1999], 68). The subject continued to be a popular choice among European nobles, and versions were found in the collections of Cardinal Thomas Wolsey, King Henry VIII, and the French royal collection (Campbell, *Tapestry in the Renaissance*, 151–56).

71 Juan de Flores, *Crónica incompleta de los Reyes Católicos, 1469–1476* (Madrid: 1934), 132–33.

archetype of queenship.⁷² Several of the inventory entries explicitly mention the inclusion of royal arms or emblems in the description of the weavings.⁷³ When such objects were displayed, the surrounding space would have become visually and conceptually incorporated into Isabel's realm.

The articulation of political and economic power was also established in a more permanent manner through the queen's architectural patronage. Isabel and Fernando sponsored a number of new façades at important locations across their territories.⁷⁴ Interior visual programs such as the *Cartuja de Miraflores* integrated multiple imported and locally produced luxurious objects into an atmosphere of magnificence. Similarly, the sculptures of the kings-at-arms on the exterior of San Juan de los Reyes (Figure 5.5) serve as evidence of the intersection between permanent articulations of royal identity (such as physical architecture) and ephemeral court rituals. One of the functions of the kings-at-arms was to precede the monarchs before their appearance, either in public or to foreign representatives.⁷⁵ Had San Juan de los Reyes become the funerary site for Isabel and Fernando, as was originally intended, the exterior sculptures would have preceded the encounter with the royal remains located within.⁷⁶

The sheer expense of these works of art and architecture also contributed to the construction of Isabel's magnificence. Not only did Isabel spend large sums of money, but she also prioritized her patronage projects and collecting practices, even while having difficulty procuring the coin to pay for them.⁷⁷

72 "Otro paño grande de lana e seda de la fama que tiene en medio vna Reyna con vna ropa azul e vna espada en la mano y en la otra mano un ydolo que tiene vna valleta armada que tiene de largo diez y siete varas de cayda çinco varas y media" (Sánchez Cantón, *Libros, tapices y cuadros*, 113).

73 For example, "Otro paño pequeño con un crucifixo y nuestra señora e sant Juan tiene quatro escudos de las armas de castilla e leon e aragon [...]" (Sánchez Cantón, *Libros, tapices y cuadros*, 112). Similarly, a surviving fragment from Isabel's tapestry of the *Tree of Jesse* (Patrimonio Nacional inv. 10199609) includes Isabel and Fernando's emblems, the yoke and arrows (Delmarcel, "La collection de tapisseries de la reine Isabelle de Castille," 293–94).

74 For example, Isabel patronized architectural decoration in Segovia at the monasteries of El Parral and Santa Cruz la Real. Both were likely produced by Juan Guas (Beatrice Gilman Proske, *Castilian Sculpture: Gothic to Renaissance* [New York: 1951], 135–37, 55–62). In Granada, Isabel and Fernando sponsored the façade of Santa Isabel la Real, which features their coat of arms as well as their personal emblems.

75 Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, *Libro de la cámara real del príncipe Don Juan* (Madrid: 1880), 145–47.

76 Similarly, decoration at the *Cartuja de Miraflores* includes the Royal Bend of Castile, a heraldic military flag used to communicate the position of the king during battle. Its prominent inclusion above the portal is mirrored in the escutcheons of the chapel, symbolically marking the space as one of royal presence.

77 Yarza Luaces, *Isabel la Católica*, 91.

While today paintings are heralded as the epitome of artistic achievement and taste, for 15th-century Europeans, textiles – both tapestries and rich brocades embroidered with gold and silver threads – were some of the most luxurious and expensive materials of the era. Like many other 15th-century patrons, the economic value of Isabel's painting collection paled in comparison to the value of her tapestry and metalwork collections.⁷⁸ The inventory records for the tapestry collection emphasize the materiality of the objects themselves, focusing on the use of gold, silver, and silk as well as the scale of the weaving.⁷⁹ While tapestries were typical components of magnificence at many European courts, the participation of the Castilian economy in the production of the raw materials (wool and – to a lesser extent – silk) may have nuanced the implications of these materials in an Iberian context.⁸⁰ Taxes on the movement of flocks, the royally-sponsored fairs, and the royally-sponsored shipping industry underwrote much of Isabel's purchasing power. Therefore, when the queen appeared cloaked in the finest textiles and surrounded by tapestries, she was not only participating in contemporary expectations for royal magnificence.

78 Miguel Ángel Zalama Rodríguez, "La infructuosa venta en almoneda de las pinturas de Isabel la Católica," *Boletín del Seminario de Estudios de Arte y Arqueología* 74 (2008): 45–66.

79 For example, "Another cloth on which Alexander is put on the field with the King Porus whom he had defeated with much gold and much silk, that has in length seven and a third *varas* and falls five and one-half *varas*" ("Otro paño en que esta Alexandro metido en campo con el rey poro e le tiene vençido es de mucho oro e mucha seda que tiene de largo siete varas e vna terçia e de cayda çinco varas e media") (Sánchez Cantón, *Libros, tapices y cuadros*, 111).

80 During Isabel's reign, the annual sheep migrations across the *cañadas* involved hundreds of thousands of animals, with the majority of the wool destined for the Burgundian Netherlands. See Julius Klein, *The Mesta: A Study in Spanish Economic History, 1273–1836* (Boston: 1920); C.R. Phillips and W.D. Phillips, *Spain's Golden Fleece: Wool Production and the Wool Trade from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century* (Baltimore: 1997), 100–01; Peter Spufford, *Power and Profit: The Medieval Merchant in Europe* (London: 2002), 232–33; Marie-Tere Alvarez, "The Art Market in Renaissance Spain: From Flanders to Castile" (PhD dissertation, University of Southern California, 2003), 59–66; and William D. Phillips and C.R. Phillips, *A Concise History of Spain* (2010), 90–91. Raw silk was produced in Andalusia. After 1492, Isabel streamlined the Iberian silk network by simplifying the royal tax code regarding the movement and sale of luxury textiles. On the production of Iberian silk, see F.L. May, *Silk Textiles of Spain, Eighth to Fifteenth Century* (New York: 1957); Torre y del Cerro, *Testamentaria de Isabel la Católica*, 177–84; and David Jacoby, "Silk Economics and Cross-Cultural Artistic Interaction: Byzantium, the Muslim World, and the Christian West," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 58 (2004): 197–240, at 218. On the impact of the wool trade on tapestry production, see Valentín Vázquez de Prada, "Les relations commerciales hispano-flamandes et l'importation de tapisseries en Espagne," in *Tapiserie de Tournai en Espagne: La tapisserie bruxelloise en Espagne au XVIIe siècle* (Tournai: 1985), 54–87.

She was also figuratively wrapping herself in the Castilian economy and asserting her kingdom's position within European trade networks.

Isabel's preference for Netherlandish-styled art stands in stark contrast to Italian classicism, which – though not entirely absent from the queen's patronage and collecting practices – had a limited impact on Castilian art during her reign. Isabel's small collection of paintings by Italian artists and the appearance of Italianate features in some of her patronage projects counters the supposition that the queen had limited access to Italian works or was merely unaware of advances in contemporary Italian art.⁸¹ Moreover, Isabel's artistic tastes do not align with her literary tastes; Italian humanism and Latin literature were widely celebrated at the Castilian court.⁸² The inability to weave together a consistent cultural program between Isabel's artistic patronage and her literary patronage has provoked some anxieties among scholars.⁸³ However, Isabel's aesthetic preferences coincided geographically with her aims to situate Castile within the European balance of power alongside Northern European royal houses. Shortly after their marriage, Isabel and Fernando worked to form an alliance with the Duke of Burgundy. In 1472 and 1473, Isabel welcomed the Burgundian ambassadors sent by Charles the Bold in Alcalá with feasting, bullfighting, and an elaborate display of wealth.⁸⁴ She also sought actively to ally herself with the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick III and his son Maximilian I.⁸⁵

81 Yarza Luaces, "Isabel la Católica, coleccionista," 222–44; Weiss, "Isabel of Castile, Flemish Aesthetics, and Identity Construction in the Works of Juan de Flandes," 87–89. For an interpretation of Isabel's preference for Netherlandish and Hispano-Flemish artworks over those of *Quattrocento* Italy, see Silva Maroto, "La colección de pinturas de Isabel la Católica," 115–26; Domínguez Casas, "La corte y la imagen real," 78–87; and Rafael Domínguez Casas, "The Artistic Patronage of Isabel the Catholic: Medieval or Modern?," in *Queen Isabel I of Castile: Power, Patronage, Persona*, ed. Barbara Weissberger (Woodbridge: 2008), 123–48.

82 Jeremy Lawrance, "Humanism in the Iberian Peninsula," in *The Impact of Humanism on Western Europe*, ed. Anthony Goodman and Angus MacKay (London: 1990), 220–58; Nicasio Salvador Miguel, "La actividad literaria en la corte de Isabel la Católica," in *Isabel la Católica y su época* (Actas del Congreso Internacional 2004), ed. Luis Ribot, Julio Valdeón, and Elena Maza (Valladolid: 2007), 1079–96.

83 For example, see Víctor Cieto Alcaide, "La versatilidad del sistema gótico: construcción y reforma de las catedrales castellanoleonenses en el Renacimiento," in *Las catedrales españolas en la edad moderna: Aproximación a un nuevo concepto del espacio sagrado*, ed. Miguel Ángel Castillo Oreja (Madrid: 2001), 129–47; and Domínguez Casas, "The Artistic Patronage of Isabel the Catholic: Medieval or Modern?," 123–48.

84 Peggy Liss, *Isabel the Queen: Life and Times* (Philadelphia: 2004), 76.

85 One result of this diplomatic attention was the sending of German artillery to assist with the Grenadine war (Pulgar, *Crónica de los Señores Reyes Católicos*, 304). In 1488, Isabel received the ambassadors of Maximilian (Pulgar, *Crónica de los Señores Reyes Católicos*, 332–34).

Maximilian agreed to support Fernando's claim to the Duchy of Milan, which was challenged by the French crown. In exchange, he expected the support of Isabel and Fernando for his own contested claim to Flanders and the Duchy of Burgundy after the death of his wife, Mary of Burgundy.⁸⁶ Maximilian proposed that they cement the alliance through the marriage of their children.⁸⁷ The double marriage of Princess Joanna to Philip the Handsome and Margaret of Austria to Prince Juan formally integrated Spanish interests with those of Northern Europe and established the future Spanish-Habsburg line. Isabel's political aims were furthered by her ability to communicate her power and position via the political currency of her day. Her large collection of luxurious objects dominated by Netherlandish works ostensibly enhanced her messaging within a Northern European milieu. Isabel's focus on Castile's position vis-à-vis England, Burgundy, and the Holy Roman Empire enabled her to construct an international reputation, reflected in both her political activities and her artistic patronage, independent from that of her husband, who operated within a predominantly Mediterranean sphere.⁸⁸ Artistic style coincided with sociopolitical boundaries; the interest in Italianate forms was strongest in the Aragonese holdings.⁸⁹

86 Pulgar, *Crónica de los Señores Reyes Católicos*, 304.

87 Pulgar, *Crónica de los Señores Reyes Católicos*, 333.

88 Yarza Luaces, *Los Reyes Católicos*, 381–85; Joaquín Yarza Luaces, "Entre Flandes e Italia: Dos modelos y su adopción en la España de los Reyes Católicos," in *Los Reyes Católicos y la monarquía de España*, ed. Vallejo, 313–28. While Isabel has long been recognized as a major artistic patron, Fernando also promoted himself and his kingdom through the sponsoring of architectural projects and the accumulation of luxury goods, often reflecting the stylistic developments of the Italian Renaissance. See Carmen Morte García, "Fernando el Católico y las artes," in *Las artes en Aragón durante el reinado de Fernando el Católico (1479–1516)* (Barcelona: 1993), 155–98; Jack Freiberg, "Bramante's Tempietto and the Spanish Crown," *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 50 (2005): 151–205; and Miguel Ángel Zalama Rodríguez, "Fernando el Católico y las artes: Pinturas y tapices," *Revista de Estudios Colombinos* 11 (2015): 7–28.

89 This is not to say that Netherlandish art was not also influential in the Aragonese empire. See Brown, *Painting in Spain 1500–1700*, 8–15; Belozerskaya, *Rethinking the Renaissance*, 179–84; Francesc Ruiz Quesada, "Del internacional al *ars nova*: Flandes y la pintura del arco mediterráneo de la Corona de Aragón en el siglo xv," in *Aragón y Flandes: Un encuentro artístico (siglos xv–xvii)*, ed. María García Soria and María Bayón Perales (Zaragoza: 2015), 77–99; Alberto Velasco González and Francesc Fité i Llevot, "Introduction: Late Gothic Painting in the Crown of Aragon and the Hispanic Kingdoms," in *Late Gothic Painting in the Crown of Aragon and the Hispanic Kingdoms*, ed. Alberto Velasco González and Francesc Fité i Llevot (Leiden: 2018), 1–29; and Akemi Luisa Herráez Vossbrink, "Painting in Spain at the Time of Bartolomé Bermejo," in *Bartolomé Bermejo: Master of the Spanish Renaissance*, ed. Letizia Treves (New Haven: 2019), 33–40.

The social bonds that existed among the queen, her family, and her allies were reflected actively in the acquisition and use of many of the objects in Isabel's collection. Like many other rulers, she utilized reciprocal gift-giving to forge bonds between herself and others. Several of the objects in her collection were received as gifts, such as the *Mass of St. Gregory* tapestry (Figure 5.24) which she received from Joanna. Others were gifted out to visiting dignitaries, prominent members of the court, and members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy in an economy of favor articulated through objects. Occasionally, this gifting is reflected in the language of the inventories, such as "received in the city of Toledo on the twenty-fourth day of the month of May of the year 1502, an Arras tapestry of devotion rich with gold and silver and silk and wool [...]; which was given in service to His Highness the bishop of Málaga, Don Diego Ramírez, my senior chaplain."⁹⁰ Similarly, Isabel distributed objects from her collection to the closest members of her family, both during her life and upon her death. Isabel gave her daughter-in-law Margaret of Austria tapestries, silver harnesses, and a diamond bracelet in the form of Isabel's personal emblem of arrows.⁹¹ The two tapestries depicting the *Mass of St. Gregory* were similarly distributed to Isabel's daughters.⁹² The ability of items associated with Isabel to reflect these personal connections even extended to items purchased from her collection after her death. For example, all of the successfully liquidated panel paintings from the unfinished *Retablo de Isabel* (Figures 5.21–5.22) were purchased by significant figures in Isabel's social network.⁹³ Like objects received directly from Isabel herself, the panels of the *Retablo de Isabel* would have served as a perpetual reminder of the owner's connection to the original patron. Gift giving, royal donations and luxurious displays not only articulated the power, wealth, and persona of the queen but also disseminated her aesthetic preferences for Northern European goods as demonstrated by the decoration of her architectural sites, her tapestry collection, and her collection of paintings.

90 "Rescebistes en la cibdad de Toledo a veynte e quatro dias del mes de mayo de mill e quinientos e dos años un paño de Ras de devoción rico de oro e plata e seda e lana [...]; el qual dió en servicio a Su Alteza el obispo de Málaga do diego Ramirez mi capellan mayor" (Sánchez Cantón, *Libros, tapices y cuadros*, 121).

91 Sánchez Cantón, *Libros, tapices y cuadros*, 91, 108–09; Pietro Martire d'Anghiera, *Epistolario*, trans. José López de Toro, 4 vols (Madrid: 1953–1957), 1:334.

92 The smaller, now-lost version was given to Isabel's daughter María, Queen of Portugal, while the version woven by Van Aelst was returned to Joanna (Sánchez Cantón, *Libros, tapices y cuadros*, 149–50; Campbell, *Tapestry in the Renaissance*, 148).

93 Weiss, "Relics of *Los Reyes Católicos*," 169–70.

5 Conclusion

Isabel was an avid collector and active art patron. She sponsored the founding of religious institutions, employed court painters, and acquired a large number of tapestries, paintings, and other luxury goods. The vast majority of these objects were created in a Northern European visual style, either by importing objects from the Low Countries, employing immigrant artists trained in Northern Europe, or supporting local Spanish artists who worked in a hybridized Hispano-Flemish style. Architectural environments such as San Juan de los Reyes and the Cartuja de Miraflores were built in a late gothic style and filled with permanent displays of sculpture, stained glass, and paintings that argued for Isabel's legitimacy, wealth, sophistication, and devotion. This messaging was then continued and nuanced during ephemeral court celebrations where Isabel's collection of moveable goods was used to construct elaborate displays, imitating the sophistication and magnificence of the famed Burgundian ducal court. Luxurious textiles and jewels were especially impressive to foreign ambassadors, and their display supported the negotiation of treaties beneficial to Castile. Isabel's dedication to entwining her kingdom with Northern European courts through the marriage of her children infused political significance into her art patronage and collecting practices. The display of Netherlandish-styled art therefore communicated Castilian power through the visual language of Isabel's allies. The deliberate importation of Northern European aesthetics into Castile was furthered by Isabel's economic policies encouraging trade between Iberia and Northern Europe, reinforcing the Iberian perception of Northern-European luxury goods as articulating a specifically Isabelline message.

However, due to the specific cultural context of Castile, it was also necessary for Isabel to balance the sumptuousness of her court with the traditional Christian values of humility and asceticism.⁹⁴ For example, while visiting the army during the siege of Granada, Isabel felt that the grandees were too

94 Isabel also actively used art to support the Christianization of newly conquered lands and subsequent conversion efforts. See Isidro Gonzalo Bango Torviso, "Las imágenes en los templos medievales: Del aniconismo a la intención docente. Las tres posturas tradicionales de la iglesia," in *La enseñanza en la Edad Media* (X Semana de Estudios Medievales, Nájera 1999), ed. José Ignacio de la Iglesia Duarte (Logroño: 2000), 363–65; Felipe Pereda, "Through a Glass Darkly: Paths to Salvation in Spanish Painting at the Outset of the Inquisition," in *Judaism and Christian Art: Aesthetic Anxieties from the Catacombs to Colonialism*, ed. Herbert Kessler and David Nirenberg (Philadelphia: 2011), 263–90; and Felipe Pereda, *Images of Discord: Poetics and Politics of the Sacred Image in Fifteenth-Century Spain* (London: 2018).

ostentatious in their personal effects. The silk tents trimmed in gold thread, embossed armor, and gold plate conflicted with the holy mission of the military campaign.⁹⁵ This concern over lavishness and its equivalency with lax religiosity coincided with the framing of the economic travesties of Enrique IV's reign as resulting from the lasciviousness and extravagance of his court. Isabel then set out to rectify this moral depravity by curbing cultural excess through the decreeing of new sumptuary laws.⁹⁶ A similar criticism was even levelled against Isabel herself in a letter written in September of 1492 by Hernando de Talavera, her confessor and bishop of Granada. He criticized the queen after the celebrations of the treaty of Barcelona by implying a direct connection between the courtly excess of gifts, feasting, and sumptuous textiles with the dances and illicit mingling between French knights and Castilian women.⁹⁷ Isabel defended the courtly displays, arguing that it was necessary to convey the impression that Castile was a strong and wealthy kingdom, foremost among the kingdoms of Europe and therefore not easily intimidated. The exchange between Isabel and Talavera reveals the complex and competing ideologies that affected the collection and use of material culture in the articulation of political power and monarchical identity in Renaissance Iberia.

95 Pulgar, *Crónica de los Señores Reyes Católicos*, 115.

96 Barabara Weissberger, "Me atrevo a escribir así: Confessional Politics in the Letters of Isabel I and Hernando de Talavera," in *Women at Work in Spain: From the Middle Ages to Early Modern Times*, ed. Marilyn Stone and Carmen Benito-Vessels (New York: 1998), 154; Amanda Wunder, "Spanish Fashion and Sumptuary Legislation from the Thirteenth to the Eighteenth Century," in *The Right to Dress: Sumptuary Laws in a Global Perspective*, ed. Giorgio Riello and Ulinka Rublack (Cambridge: 2019), 253–54.

97 Rafael García y García de Castro, *Virtudes de la Reina Católica* (Granada: 1961), 364.

Ludic Dimensions of Courtly Love at the Court of Isabel *la Católica*

Roger Boase

During the 15th century the Spanish royal court, like other European courts, fulfilled many functions. First of all, it was the place where the monarch (with his or her household, courtiers and counsellors) resided, and was thus the seat of government – although Spain then had no fixed capital. The court was itinerant.¹ There was as yet no clear separation of public and private spheres of activity, as the branches of the modern state were still in the process of emerging from the royal household and the Royal Council.²

Secondly, it was a court of appeal where victims of injustice could apply for the redress of wrongs.³ Queen Isabel of Castile, who had a reputation for being both generous and stern, took her judicial role very seriously as she travelled through her realms. Commenting on her reputation for severity, her chronicler Fernando de Pulgar writes:

She was very fond of administering justice, so much so that she was accused of following more the way of severity than that of mercy; and this she did to remedy the great criminal corruption that she found in the kingdom when she inherited it.⁴

Thirdly, it was a cultural center, or school of social refinement, where young men of noble family were sent to be educated in manners and where they received some grounding in humanistic learning as well as military training.

1 The itinerary of the royal court is well documented in Antonio Rumeu de Armas, *Itinerario de los Reyes Católicos, 1475–1516* (Madrid: 1974).

2 Miguel-Ángel Ladero Quesada, “La Casa Real en la baja Edad Media,” *Historia. Instituciones. Documentos* 25 (1998): 327–50.

3 The political and judicial functions of the court were already clearly defined in the *Siete partidas*, the law book commissioned by Alfonso *el Sabio* in the 13th century.

4 “Era muy inclinada a facer justicia, tanto que le era imputado seguir más la vía de rigor que de la piedad; y esto facía por remediar a la gran corrupción de crimines que falló en el Reyno quando subcedió en el” (Fernando de Pulgar, *Crónica de los Reyes Católicos*, ed. Juan de Mata Carriazo [Madrid: 1943], 1:37). All English translations are mine.

Serving initially as pageboys, some would remain there as courtiers and officials. The court was, as the poet and musician Juan del Encina (1468–1529) says, “an excellent school / of upbringing and courtesy.”⁵ It is evident from a passage in the *Siete partidas* that this custom of sending young gentlemen to be educated at court even predates the reign of Alfonso *el Sabio*: “it has always been the custom in Spain for worthy men to send their sons to be brought up at the courts of kings where they may learn how to be courteous, and educated, and free from uncouthness and all defects.”⁶ The queen – who wished to stamp out the corruption and bad habits that had prevailed at the court of her predecessor and half brother Enrique IV of Castile – was deeply committed to this educational project, one of the aims of which was to inculcate courtly and chivalric ideals. She supervised the education of all her children, appointed tutors for them and recruited the Italian humanists Pietro Martire d’Anghiera and Lucio Marineo Sículo to give classes at court. She herself received lessons in Latin from the court lady Beatriz Galindo (1465–1535), nicknamed *La Latina*.⁷ The serious interest that the queen took in scholarly learning, and her influence as a role model, are expressed in a well-known passage by the *converso* notary Juan Ramírez de Lucena (1430–1506) in a letter composed ca. 1490:

What kings do, whether good or bad, we all try to do; if it is good, to please ourselves, if it is bad, to please them. The king used to gamble, so we were all cardsharps. The queen studies, [so] now we are students.⁸

5 “una escuela ecelente / de criança y cortesía” (Encina, *Obras completas*, ed. Ana M. Rambaldo [Madrid: 1978], 2:32).

6 “fue en España siempre acostumbrado de los homes honrados enviar a sus fijos a criar a las cortes de los reyes porque aprendiesen a ser corteses, et enseñados et quitos de villanía et de todo yerro” (*Siete partidas*, 2:ix, 27).

7 “Esa misma Latina fue Beatriz Galindo [...] informada la Rreyna Cathólica doña Ysabel de su perssona e onestidad, e que era gentil latina, la quiso tener a par de sí en su cámara, porque enseñase a su Alteza la lengua latina, aunque ya la Rreyna era de edad” (Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, *Batallas y quinquagenas*, ed. Juan Bautista Avallé-Arce [Salamanca: 1989], 149); “la cual Beatriz Galindo por otro nombre la llamaron la Latina, porque así era, e vino donzella a enseñar gramática a la Reina, e le enseñó las letras latinas (Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, *Libro de la Cámara Real del príncipe Don Juan* [Valencia: 2006], 138); Roger Boase, *Secrets of Pinar’s Game* (Leiden: 2017), 260. For more on Beatriz Galindo see Elizabeth Teresa Howe’s essay in this volume.

8 “Lo que los reyes fassen, bueno o malo, todos ensayamos de lo faser; si es bueno, por aplacer a nos mesmos, y si es malo, por aplacer a ellos. Jugaba el rey, éramos todos tahures; studia la reina, somos agora studiantes” (Lucia Binotti, “La Epístola exhortatoria a las letras de Juan de Lucena: Humanismo y educación en la Castilla del siglo xv,” *La Corónica* 28 [2000]: 51–80, at 77).

In Spanish medieval texts the word *cortesía* denotes a practical form of customary wisdom that closely corresponds to the Arab concept of *adab*, comprising all the skills and accomplishments of the perfect courtier and man of letters – in other words, of anyone who could claim to be, or aspired to become, a member of “the leisure class.”⁹ Courtesy was also an essential attribute of court officials: they formed a “vicarious leisure class”¹⁰ who were expected, like their masters, to give the appearance of abstaining from all economically productive labor. It is this same combination of military and sporting prowess with social and academic skills that one finds portrayed in Baldassare Castiglione’s *Il cortegiano* (published in Venice in 1528), a work translated into Castilian by Juan Boscán, printed in Barcelona in 1534, and widely imitated, including by Luis Milán in *El cortesano* (published in Valencia in 1561).

An integral part of this practical wisdom was learning how to conduct oneself in a pleasing way. During the 15th century, everyone who attended the royal court, or the courts of aristocrats such as the Duke of Alba, the Duke of Medina Sidonia, or Cardinal Mendoza, had to be – or at least had to pretend to be – both a poet and a lover; and, besides, had to show some appreciation of music.¹¹ According to Juan Alfonso de Baena’s preface to the songbook that he compiled for Juan II of Castile around 1435, every courtier “should be a lover, and should always boast or pretend to be in love.”¹² Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo (1478–1557) – who, as a young man, was in the service of the queen’s only son Prince Juan – makes a similar comment which proves that this dictum remained equally true for courtiers and poets at Isabel’s court:

It is the custom in Spain among gentlemen of quality, even though they are not in love or have passed middle age, to pretend that they are lovers when they attend the court, by serving and favoring a particular lady, and by spending as much as befits their rank on festivities and other things

9 José Antonio Maravall, “La *cortesía* como el saber en la Edad Media,” *Estudios de historia del pensamiento español*, vol. 1 (Madrid: 1967), 261–74.

10 Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (Boston: 1973), 56.

11 Jane Whetnall, “Secular Songs in Fifteenth-Century Spain,” in *Companion to Music in the Age of the Catholic Monarchs*, ed. Tess Knighton (Leiden: 2017), 60–96.

12 “que siempre se preçie e se finja de ser enamorado” (*El Cancionero de Juan Alfonso de Baena*, ed. Brian Dutton and Joaquín González Cuenca [Madrid: 1993], 8). Baena thought that, in order to become a good poet, one should read widely, hear many books read aloud, acquire a knowledge of many languages, and visit the courts of many kings and great lords.

organized by way of pastimes and love affairs, without really feeling Cupid's torment.¹³

It was precisely this duty of every gentleman to act the part of a lover and to publicize his love (but – as will later be explained – in a veiled manner, only accessible to a circle of initiates) that turned love and poetry into a kind of game. Encina, when asked about life at court, replied: "There gallantry displays itself; / there courtiers do their courting, / proclaiming their toils, / passions and sufferings; / they appear very submissive, / very enslaved by the ladies: / some proclaim their favors, / while others lament their want of favor, / consumed in living flames."¹⁴

The court was thus a place of leisure and recreation where courtiers and court ladies were encouraged to participate in many different forms of entertainment, inspired by a spirit of emulation, and where foreign dignitaries would be entertained. It was, in short, a milieu where poetry, music, and other artistic activities flourished under royal patronage. Pedro de Gracia Dei (who, like Pulgar, was a chronicler of Jewish ancestry, but a far inferior writer) describes how the court was teeming with pageboys who had come in order to study how to read, write, sing and play musical instruments, and where they also received instructions in swimming, fencing, archery, chess, Latin, and the art of public speaking.¹⁵ When, at the age of twenty-one, a squire had qualified as a knight and had acquired sufficient skill in horsemanship, he might be permitted to enter a jousting tournament, which might last three days or longer. The jousting was followed every evening by splendid banquets, masques, and masked balls. The presence of ladies as spectators, who would afterwards participate in the feasting and dancing, imbued these festivities with courtly and chivalric idealism. This function of the court as a center of recreation – a stage where the courtiers, like actors, played their parts – became increasingly

13 "Costumbre es en España entre los señores de estado, que venidos a la corte, aunque no estén enamorados o que pasen de la mitad de la edad, finjir que aman, por servir y favorecer a alguna dama y gastar como quien son en fiestas y otras cosas que se ofrecen de tales pasatiempos y amores, sin que les dé pena Cupido" (Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, *Batallas y quinquagenas*, ed. Juan Pérez de Tudela y Bueso [Madrid: 1983–2002], 1:249).

14 "Allí luzen los amores; / allí festejan galanes / publicando sus afanes, / sus passiones y dolores; / muéstranse muy servidores, / muy cativos de las damas: / unos publican favores, / otros lloran disfavores, / ardidios en bivas llamas" (Encina, *Obras*, 2:33).

15 Pedro de Gracia Dei, "La crianza e virtuosa dotrina dedicada a la muy illustre y esclarecida señora Isabel primera, Infante de Castilla," in *Opúsculos literarios de los siglos XIV a XVI*, vol. 29 (Madrid: 1892), 398.

important in the late Middle Ages, especially in Spain. Indeed, it has been said that within the social confines of the Isabeline court “the ludic quality of courtly love acquired a peculiar and defining intensity.”¹⁶

1 Poetry and Games in Verse

The poetic output of Spain during the 15th century, much of which can be classified as amatory verse, far exceeds that of any other European country during this period. Brian Dutton’s monumental and indispensable indexed anthology in seven volumes lists over 7,000 poems in Castilian by almost a thousand poets in the years 1350–1520.¹⁷ These are drawn from 190 manuscripts and 221 printed works, most of them anthologies rather than the collected works of individual authors. The largest of the printed anthologies, the *Cancionero general*, edited by Hernando de Castillo and first published in Valencia in 1511, contains over 900 poems of widely varying quality, most of them composed during the reign of the Catholic Monarchs. The sheer quantity of extant verse reflects the central role of poetry in the cultural life of this period. All the poems ever read, recited, or set to music from the late 14th century onwards can be regarded as items in a vast collective game, requiring from players an extraordinary capacity to memorize verse and a sensitivity to analogies and resonances. Readers today can rediscover some of the pleasure of this game provided that they acquire some understanding of the courtly conventions and their historical context.

The *Juego trobado*,¹⁸ a card game completed by Gerónimo Pinar shortly before 22 August 1496 – when the Infanta Juana, now Archduchess of Austria, set sail with her retinue from the Cantabrian port of Laredo for Flanders to join her husband Philip the Fair, son of the Emperor Maximilian – offers us much insight into how poetry and music functioned in a social context. This game, dedicated to Queen Isabel, would have reminded the court ladies and members of the Castilian royal family about many aspects of cultural life during

16 Julian Weiss, concerning Macpherson’s chapter, “The Game of Love,” in *Poetry at Court in Trastamara Spain: From the “Cancionero de Baena” to the “Cancionero general,”* ed. E. Michael Gerli and Julian Weiss (Tempe, AZ: 1998), 10.

17 Brian Dutton, *El cancionero del siglo xv, c. 1360–1520* (Salamanca: 1990–91). All ID numbers and sigla for texts cited in this chapter are from this work.

18 ID 6637; 11CG-875, 14CG-948. This game is edited and studied in Ana M. Rodado Ruiz, *Juegos trobados de los cancioneros cuatrocentistas*, Publications of the Medieval Hispanic Research Seminar 61 (London: 2012), and in Boase, *Secrets*.

Isabel's reign: memories of people and events, court songs and ballads and the music associated with them,¹⁹ jousting and hunting with hawks, and the popular wisdom contained in proverbs. It provides us today with a lens through which, with the aid of research, we can obtain access to the collective memory and thought processes of a group of educated women at a particular moment in time when culture still depended far more on the spoken than on the written or printed word. The introductory rubric explains that this work is a game in verse which can be played with dice or playing cards, and that in this game one may win or lose by drawing a match or not, and by forming a pair.²⁰ It thus seems to have been a fortune-telling game as well as a game of love predicting the future of the participants, although much of the fun would seem to derive from the pleasure of recognition.

Each of the 46 players, including six members of the Castilian royal family, is allotted a card with a tree or plant, a bird, a song, and a proverb. By means of these four lots or *suertes*, one has to identify six members of the royal family and 40 court ladies. It is evident from this guessing game concerning the identity and marriage prospects of the court ladies that the participants were expected to remember not only numerous proverbs and jousting poems (*invenciones*), most of which had been displayed at the start of Isabel's reign, but also a few compositions by poets associated with the courts of Enrique II, Enrique III and Juan II of Castile, and with the Aragonese-Neapolitan court of the King of Aragon, Alfonso *el Magnánimo*. Stanza 4 alludes to a poem in Galician²¹ that is only found in the *Cancionero de Baena*, written by Alfonso Álvarez de Villasandino in 1374 for Doña Juana de Sosa, the beautiful mistress of Enrique II of Castile, who is described walking with other ladies under the orange trees in the gardens of Seville. "Pues partiendo despendí," cited in stanza 6, and "Si non fuesse tanto avante," cited in stanza 29, are both by poets of the Neapolitan court. The former was written by Juan de Tapia between 1458 and 1461 and was addressed to Catarina Orsini (ca. 1425–1470), wife of Mariano d'Alagno (1425–1482), Count of Buchianico. The latter is by Carvajal, author of many fine poems, including one in praise of Lucrezia d'Alagno,²² the Count

19 Boase, "Una parte del repertorio musical de la corte de la Reina Isabel en el año 1496: Comentario sobre canciones y romances en el *Juego trobado* de Pinar que han sobrevivido en versiones musicales," *Dicenda* 38 (2020): 151–75.

20 "Comiençan las obras de Pinar, y ésta primera es un juego trobado que hizo a la reyna doña Ysabel, con el qual se puede jugar como con dados o naypes, y con él se puede ganar o perder, y echar encuentro o azar, y hazer par. Las coplas son los naypes y las quatro cosas que van en cada una d'ellas han de ser las suertes" (rubric, ID 6637).

21 ID 1162.

22 ID 0604.

of Buchianico's sister and the celebrated mistress of Alfonso *el Magnánimo*. This shows that some of the court ladies would have been able to remember many poems composed before they were born, some well over a century earlier. Furthermore, in the case of one poem, Juan de Mena's "Ya non sufre mi cuydado"²³ (allotted to Prince Juan, the second player), they were expected to remember it without the help of a first line, merely by means of certain key words.²⁴

There are very few other 15th-century card games in verse. The only elaborate games extant bear little resemblance to Pinar's *Juego* and predate Isabel's reign. Fernando de la Torre is the author of a highly idiosyncratic *Juego de naipes*, which he composed in the late 1450s and dedicated to the Countess of Castañeda, Mencía Enríquez de Mendoza (d. 1480), daughter of Alonso Enríquez, Admiral of Castile. In this work, edited by Nancy Marino in 2006, there are four suits, each corresponding to four categories of love, and each with its symbolic color: swords (*espadas*) for the love of nuns; clubs (*bastones*) for widows; cups (*copas*) for married women; and coins (*oros*) for maidens. The general message conveyed by the game is that lovers should be constant and loyal. It is difficult to prove that the ladies at the court of Isabel were familiar with this game. Certainly the inclusion in the first suit of the love of women with a religious vocation would not have met with the queen's approval. But it is significant that the poet encourages lovers to be persevering in their pursuit of nuns by citing the proverb "Porfía mata venado [que no montero cansado]"²⁵ because, in the third stanza of Pinar's *Juego trobado*, this same proverb is assigned to Isabel of Portugal (1470–1498), Queen Isabel's eldest daughter, who had vowed that she would devote herself to a religious life and never remarry after the tragic death of her young husband, Prince Afonso (son of João II of Portugal) in 1491 as the result of a riding accident.²⁶ In the choice of this proverb, we can detect a concealed allusion to the Admiral of Castile, Alonso Enríquez de Castilla (1354–1429), father of the Countess of Castañeda

23 ID 0010. Juan de Mena (1411–1456) composed this poem in 1444 or 1445, shortly after his return from Florence and Rome, when he was appointed secretary to Juan II of Castile. It was addressed to the court lady Inés de Torres. See Julian Weiss, "Álvaro de Luna, Juan de Mena, and the Power of Courtly Love," *Modern Language Notes* 106 (1991): 241–56, at 246.

24 Boase, *Secrets*, 446–55; and Boase, "El *Juego trobado* de Pinar: La memoria cultural colectiva de las damas de la corte de le reina Isabel de Castilla en el año 1496," *Revista de Cancioneros Impresos y Manuscritos* 8 (2019): 1–22.

25 "The one who persists kills the deer, not the weary hunter."

26 She was eventually persuaded to marry Manuel I of Portugal, her first husband's uncle. The marriage took place on 30 September 1497 at Valencia de Alcántara, on the Portuguese frontier.

and Isabel of Portugal's maternal great-grandfather, to whom Fernando de la Torre dedicated his game, because the admiral cites this proverb in the concluding section of his *canción* "Dizen que fago follia."²⁷ This proverb is also cited in the anonymous alphabetical card game *En Ávila por la A*,²⁸ a game with which the players of Pinar's game were almost certainly familiar.²⁹

En Ávila por la A was composed for the Court of Navarre and is only recorded in the *Cancionero d'Herberay des Essarts*,³⁰ a manuscript collection compiled around 1463, shortly after the dissolution of the Navarrese court. This poem is probably by Hugo d'Urries, who it is thought was the compiler of the whole LB2 collection.³¹ It is a complicated game in the form of a burlesque royal itinerary from Ávila (in Castile) to Zarra (near Valencia) – with detours to Florence and Narbonne – in which there is an intermingling of contemporary, historical, biblical, and mythological persons. The king is received at each town by his host and hostess with a meal made from a particular bird, animal, or fruit, cooked on firewood from a particular species of tree. In each place he is entertained with a song and a proverb. There are thus not four, but nine real or symbolic elements: a town, a man's name, a woman's name, a bird, an animal, a fruit, a tree, a song, and a proverb.

The significance of the proverb "Porfía mata venado," in its application to Princess Isabel, only fully makes sense within the context of this earlier card game, which links this proverb with the palm tree (line 291), her mother's tree, which – like the phoenix – is a symbol of chastity, singularity, and royalty.³² Portugal (whence Isabel derives her title, Isabel de Portugal, and the place where she will find love again by marrying King Manuel) begins (like the word *Porfía*) with *POR*, as does the first word of her *letra* "Por desviar" ("To deflect"), a jousting and nautical expression referring to the oar she displayed as her emblem, or *divisa*,³³ an obvious phallic symbol and an appropriate emblem for the Portuguese maritime empire. It alludes also, I believe, to Remus (*Remo*), co-founder of Rome, since Lisbon had been dubbed the "new Rome" and

27 ID 0021; SA7–89.

28 ID 2304; LB2–200, lines 298–99.

29 It is not the only proverb cited in both works (Boase, *Secrets*, 794).

30 LB2.

31 Charles V. Aubrun (ed.), *Le Chansonnier espagnol d'Herberay des Essarts* (Bordeaux: 1951), xliii.

32 Roger Boase, "The Image of the Phoenix in Catalan and Castilian Poetry from Ausiàs March to Crespí de Valldaura," in *Medieval Hispanic Studies in Memory of Alan Deyermond*, ed. Andrew M. Beresford et al. (Woodbridge, Suffolk: 2013), 39–69.

33 ID 6401; IICG-591.

King Manuel was sometimes addressed as *Caesarissimus*.³⁴ It is likely that this *invención* was displayed during the festivities that took place in Seville at Easter in 1490 when – before travelling to Portugal – Isabel was wedded by proxy to Prince Afonso.

It is interesting to compare Pinar's *Juego trobado* with Luis de Milán's *Libro de motes de damas y cavalleros, intitulado El juego de mandar* (Valencia: 1535). In this witty parlor game, ladies and gentlemen at the Valencian court of King Fernando's widow, Germana de Foix, were required to remember poems composed nearly a century earlier as well as numerous personal emblems and proverbs. A gentleman invites a lady to open the book at random. After opening it, he discovers a lady and a gentleman depicted there, each accompanied by a *mote*, or saying, by means of which the gentleman can identify the lady and obey her instructions. One wonders whether Pinar's *Juego trobado* could have been played in a similar way and whether it was originally illustrated: each of the 46 stanzas may have been a card, with the portrait of the recipient accompanied by the image of a bird and a tree or plant. One should also note that Fernando de la Torre gives meticulous instructions to a miniaturist on how the cards in his game should be decorated – proof that the poet had specific historical persons in mind.

To understand how the *Libro de motes* was played, I shall merely cite one stanza:

You will look among these ladies,
if there is any Ángela,
and tell her: "Only one."
Ángela:
she is an angel, she will be an angel,
and the one to whom she is the good [angel]
is always filled with glory.³⁵

In her commentary on these verses, Isabel Vega Vázquez expresses doubts about the identity of Ángela because in Milán's *El Cortesano*, two Ángelas are

34 François Soyér, "Manuel I of Portugal and the End of the Toleration of Islam in Castile: Marriage Diplomacy, Propaganda, and Portuguese Imperialism in Renaissance Europe, 1495–1504," *Modern History* 18 (2014): 331–56, at 336; and Boase, *Secrets*, 91–92.

35 "Buscaréys por estas damas, / si hay Ángela alguna, / y dezilde: 'Sola una.' / Ángela: / ángel es, ángel será, / y a quien ella es el bueno / siempre está de gloria lleno" (*El libro de motes de damas y caballeros de Luis de Milán*, ed. Vega Vázquez [Santiago de Compostela: 2006], 67, stanza 52; Hiiii).

mentioned: Ángela de Aragón y Milán, Countess of Almenara, and Ángela de Santángel, Countess of Acuña. However, she herself has unwittingly solved the riddle by citing the first stanza of a poem by Juan de Mena:³⁶

Brighter than the moon
 you were born into the world
 unique,
 so gracious that you never had,
 or possessed,
 a single rival.
 Since your childhood in the cradle
 you acquired fame and beauty,
 with the enormous gracefulness
 with which Fortune endowed you.³⁷

This stanza not only contains the line “sola una” but also the key word *cuna*, “lineage” (“cradle” or “native soil”), a clue that Ángela is the courtesan Ángela de Santángel (1463–after 1522),³⁸ daughter of the royal scribe Luis de Santángel (1439–1498), Countess of Acuña by her marriage to Pedro Vázquez de Acuña. The reader is led from the present (“ángel es”) to the future (“ángel será”) and then to the glory of the celestial hereafter, the world of angels. Vega Vázquez observes that the good angel is the Angel Gabriel who greeted Mary at the Annunciation with the words “Hail, Mary full of grace” (Luke 1: 28), a phrase synonymous with “llena de gloria.”³⁹

Furthermore, there is an allusion here to Pedro de Acuña’s personal *invención* of two angels with wings emerging from a cloud with the *letra* “I always see my troubled mind / guarded by two angels”:⁴⁰ one being his guardian angel, the other his wife Ángela de Santángel whom he married for love in March 1506 – a marriage arranged to coincide with King Fernando’s second

36 Vega Vázquez, *Libro de motes*, 213, 224; ID 2329; IICG-57, BM1–19, ME1–28.

37 “Más clara que non la luna / sola una / en el mundo vos naçistes, / tan gentil que non ovistes, / nin tovistes, / competidora ninguna. / Desde niñez en la cuna / cobrastes fama e beldad, / con mucha graçiosidad / que vos dotó la Fortuna” (*Obra lírica de Juan de Mena*, ed. Miguel Ángel Pérez Prieto [Madrid: 1979], 77).

38 For information on the Santángel family, a wealthy mercantile family of Jewish ancestry who helped to finance Columbus and to furnish the royal family with delicacies, see Boase, *Secrets*, 313–37.

39 Vega Vázquez, *Libro de motes*, 214.

40 “Siempre veo mi cuydado / de dos ángeles guardado” (Fernández de Oviedo, *Batallas*, ed. Avalue-Arce, 381).

marriage – after she had been his mistress for many years. He expresses the same idea in another *letra*: “God gives us only one angel, / and with you I had two.”⁴¹ Fernández de Oviedo adds that Ángela lived up to her name because “she was a friend of God and charitable and devout, and her actions were naturally very excellent.”⁴²

In another, more humorous card game by Luis de Milán, addressed to ladies of the Valencian court, and published in *El cortesano* (Valencia: 1561), each stanza begins with the words “Toma, vivo te lo dó” (“Take, I give it to you alive”). This refrain derives from a popular game played by both children and adults which has been found in many countries,⁴³ demonstrating the permeability of the boundary between the courtly and the popular.⁴⁴ The game involves passing a burning stick, or straw, from one person to another. Each recipient of the firebrand has to pass it on as quickly as possible after blowing on the fire to keep it alight because the person in whose hands the fire dies out will be penalized. Sometimes the person who gives the firebrand will say, “Sopla, vivo te lo dó” (“Blow on it, I give it to you alive”), and the one receiving it will say, “¿Para dó?” (“Where to?”). Both versions are found in traditional popular verse.⁴⁵ The refrain generally continues: “si tú, muerto me lo das / tú me lo pagarás” (“if you give it to me dead / you will have to pay for it”). The penalty could be to recite some verses, or to reveal a secret, or to undergo some ordeal.⁴⁶

41 “Un ángel sólo da Dios, / y con vos tuve yo dos” (Fernández de Oviedo, *Batallas*, 381).

42 “fue muy amiga de Dios e limosnera e piadosa, e naturalmente sus obras fueron de mucha exçelencia” (Fernández de Oviedo, *Batallas*, 381).

43 José Manuel Pedrosa, “Toma, vivo te lo do: Avatares y rescrituras viejas y modernas de un juego infantil,” in *Presencia del cancionero popular infantil en la lírica hispánica*, ed. Pedro C. Cerrillo and César Sánchez Ortiz (Cuenca: 2013), 167–82.

44 There was a growing interest in popular verse in the late 15th century, which enabled court poets to reinvigorate their craft. Encina, Pinar, Juan Manuel and many others competed to write courtly versions of traditional ballads, some of which are cited in Pinar’s *Juego trobado*.

45 See Margit Frenk, *Corpus de la antigua lírica popular hispánica*, ed. John Albert Bickford and Kathryn Kruger-Hickman (Madrid: 1987), 2126A, 2126B, 2127A.

46 There are several English versions of the game, including: “Jack is alive, and likely to live, / if he dies in your hand you’ve a forfeit to give”; see Iona and Peter Opie, *The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes* (Oxford: 1975), no. 256; cited in Pedrosa, “Toma, vivo,” 179. According to Sebastián de Covarrubias, *Tesoro de la lengua* (Madrid: 1994), this game was played in ancient Greece, where it was dedicated to Vulcan and Prometheus (see entry for *Soplar*).

Here are two stanzas of Milán's game addressed to the court ladies Esperanza d'Espés and Francina de Centellas:⁴⁷

Take, I am live: I give it to you.
 For Lady Esperanza Despés,
 who was the wife of Santángel,
 and by her he had an angel,
 for in everything she is an angel,
 and she became his hope [*spes*];
 since she had great expectation,
 she gave birth as if she were a paint brush.

Take, I am live: I give it to you.
 For her mother-in-law Centellas,
 who belonged to the Count of Oliva,
 the saliva from whose mouth
 was salt for the beautiful ladies.
 Her salt mines were a source of income
 so that she had such a salty wit
 that it would have been better
 had she been named Francisca Salinas.⁴⁸

Esperanza d'Espés is so plump, and her husband is so small, that he looks as if he were her new-born baby. Santángel's diminutive size and the discrepancy in height between him and his wife also made him the butt of humor in some scurrilous verses by Fadrique Enríquez (1457–1538), fourth Admiral of Castile – verses discovered, according to the rubric, in a hunting lodge where the admiral and his friends had been staying.⁴⁹ Francina de Centellas, daughter of the Count of Oliva, received a good income from salt because the Santángel

47 The former was the wife of Miguel Gerónimo Santángel, Ángela de Santángel's brother, and the daughter of the Majordomo Ramón d'Espés and Isabel Fabra; the latter was the sister of Isabel de Centelles, and thus Ángela de Santángel's aunt.

48 "Toma, bivo te lo dó. / A doña Sperança d'Espés, / que muger fue de Sanctángel, / que por ella tuvo el ángel, / pues en todo un ángel es; / y ella, su d'Espés por él, / pues tuvo gran esperança, / que parió como un pinzel. / Toma, bivo te lo dó. / Para su suegra Centellas, / que fue del Conde d'Oliva, / de su boca la saliva / que sal fue para las bellas. / Provisión fueron sus minas / de sal, pues fue tan salada / que mejor fuera nombrada / doña Francisca Salinas" (Luis de Milán, *El Cortesano: Libro de motes, de Damas y Caballeros*, ed. Vicent Josep Escartí and Antoni Tordera [Valencia: 2001], 1:601–02).

49 ID 6977–78; LB5–13–14.

family leased the salt mines of La Mata, north of Alicante. The lady whom the poet names Francisca Salinas is actually Francisca Enríquez, whose fortune also derived from salt: her husband Sancho de Rojas, second Marquis of Poza, inherited salt mines from his mother the court lady Marina Sarmiento, daughter of the Count of Salinas. This is why, in the *Juego trobado*, Marina is given a proverb saying that not everything white is flour.⁵⁰

The witty poet Antonio de Velasco (d. 1526), a first cousin of both the Admiral and King Fernando, devised a similar game for eight court ladies, which was probably the inspiration behind Luis de Milán's *Libro de motes*. One of these ladies was, I believe, Esperanza d'Espés, alluded to in the verses:

Take, I give it to you alive.
Where to?
To see Hope.
Look, it can never be reached:
her name has deceived us.⁵¹

This same lady is mentioned indirectly in Garci Sánchez de Badajoz's *Infierno de amor* about famous warriors who had died for the sake of love: "Antonio de Velasco / used to endure boundless suffering / and the loss of hope."⁵²

2 Courtly Love

These games and all amatory verse composed in Spain in the late Middle Ages can only be properly understood within the framework of the courtly love tradition. Games provided love-poets with many of their metaphors.⁵³ Much critical attention has been devoted to the notion of "courtly love." It has been subjected to a bewildering variety of uses and definitions as it has been approached from the perspective of a wide diversity of disciplines including

50 "todo blanco no es harina" (Boase, *Secrets*, 153–57).

51 "– Toma, bivo, te lo dó. / – ¿Para dó? / – Para ver al Esperança. / – Mira, que nunca se alcança: / su nombre nos engañó" (ID 6815; 14CG-123).

52 "Passava mal sin medida / don Antonio de Velasco, / y el esperança perdida" (Patrick Gallagher, *The Life and Works of Garci Sánchez de Badajoz* [London: 1968], stanza 29, page 105). For mistakes in identifying the "lovers" arising from a mistaken sequence of stanzas, see Boase, *Secrets*, 531.

53 Consider, for example, three humorous "jousts of love" by Tristán de Estúñiga (ID 6752), Juan del Encina (ID 4469), and Antonio de Velasco (ID 6820).

philology, sociology, psychology, cultural history and literary criticism.⁵⁴ One of the most fruitful approaches has been to view this phenomenon as a manifestation of the ludic (i.e. playful) element in culture. In the 20th century some scholars such as D.W. Robertson,⁵⁵ John Benton,⁵⁶ and E. Talbot Donaldson,⁵⁷ reacting against excessive theorizing, dismissed *amour courtois* as a fallacy of modern criticism, an imaginary construct superimposed on medieval literature and society – a pure invention, evoking a romanticized version of the medieval world, reflecting the interests and concerns of the late 19th century (Gaston Paris introduced it as a critical concept in 1883).⁵⁸ Others have expressed skepticism about the usefulness of lumping diverse attitudes toward love together and then applying such a blunt instrument to the study of five centuries of literature.⁵⁹

Before proceeding further, I wish to say a few words in defense of my use and my understanding of the term “courtly love.” Nothing is to be achieved by speaking instead of “the courtly experience,” which is “universally possible in any time or place and on any level of society,” and is “at least as old as Egypt of the second millennium B.C.”⁶⁰ Most critics now agree that “courtly love” is convenient as a broad generic term to describe a literary tradition and a civilizing fiction that shaped human conduct and tempered relations between the sexes in “polite society,” a love that “combined physical desire with devotion to a higher object, the desire to be ennobled, refined by love [...] a secular love of body and mind, a ritual pursuit of love that continues whether or not the object is achieved.”⁶¹ This particular conception of “true love” was first elaborated in the courts of southern France at the end of the 11th century within the social context of a growing number of landless knights and an upwardly mobile lower nobility, a context not so dissimilar to that which existed in 15th-century Spain.

54 Roger Boase, *The Origin and Meaning of Courtly Love: A Critical Study of European Scholarship* (Manchester: 1977).

55 “The Concept of Courtly Love as an Impediment to the Understanding of Medieval Texts,” in *The Meaning of Courtly Love*, ed. F.X. Newman (Albany: 1968), 1–18.

56 “Clio and Venus: An Historical View of Medieval Love,” in *The Meaning of Courtly Love*, ed. Newman, 19–42.

57 “The Myth of Courtly Love,” in *Speaking of Chaucer* (London: 1970), 154–63.

58 Boase, *The Origin and Meaning*, 1.

59 See Ian Macpherson, “The Game of Courtly Love: *Letra*, *Divisa* and *Invención* at the Court of the Catholic Monarchs,” in Gerli and Weiss, *Poetry at Court*, 96–97.

60 Peter Dronke, *Medieval Latin and the Rise of the European Love Lyric* (Oxford: 1965–66), 1: xvii.

61 Joan M. Ferrante, “*Cortes’Amor* in Medieval Texts,” *Speculum* 55 (1980): 686–95, at 687.

While it is true that *amour courtois* only entered the vocabulary of literary criticism in 1883, the terms *cortez'amor* and *amor cortes* do occur occasionally in Provençal literature. Besides, the adjective "courtly" is appropriate because this conception of love emerged in an aristocratic milieu and required a courtly audience. It not only implies nobility of conduct – if not always nobility of ancestry – but it conveys the essential connection between love and courtesy, which is the chief virtue that lovers were expected to possess. Courtesy was a virtue imposing restraints on male aggression and encompassing fidelity, modesty, discretion, moderation, and eloquence. Furthermore, this term is synonymous with other comparable and more common expressions such as *bon'amors* and *fin'amors* which were translated into Spanish as *buen amor* and *fino amor*, into Italian as *fin'amore*, and into German as *Hohe Minne*. As evidence of this, we may cite two passages from the personal poetry anthology of an Aragonese aristocrat composed at the end of the 15th century: "You understand 'loving well' (*bien amar*) / to mean attainment; / but it is wrong to think of removing / the obligatory sorrows / [...] Love that is 'refined love' (*fino amor*) / does not seek any reward / [...] this alone is its remedy / since the cause [of love] ennobles / that growing grief."⁶²

The essential features of this love – founded upon the analogy of feudal vassalage and religious devotion – are the beloved's sovereignty, the lover's fidelity and submission, voluntary commitment, secrecy, the interdependence of love and poetry, and the ennobling, yet potentially destructive power of love:

The beloved was invested with the sovereignty of a feudal overlord or the perfection of a goddess. The lover humbly pledged to serve her, as if he were a vassal or a slave, demanding no more than a sign of recognition for deeds performed on her behalf. Since a public display of emotion might jeopardise the lady's honour, particularly if she were married, discretion was a fundamental precept and a condition of any sexual favour which she might confer. This explains why it was customary for the poet to conceal his beloved's identity by giving her a fictitious name or *senhal*.⁶³ By endeavouring to make himself worthy, the lover acquired a number of moral, courtly and chivalrous qualities. If she were too easily

62 "Vosotros por bien amar / entendéys la de alcançar; / es yerro pensar quitar / los muy devidos dolores [...] El amor qu'es fino amor / ningún galardón procura / [...] esto solo es remediar: / ver que la causa ennoblece / aquella pena que crece" (Juan Manuel Ximénez de Urrea, *Cancionero delas obras de dō Pedro Mâuel de Vrrea* [Logroño: 1513], 40r, 38v).

63 This is the Provençal term for the fictitious name by which a poet would designate the lady who inspired his verse.

accessible, love would cease to be arduous and ennobling; yet if, on the other hand, she epitomised the archetypal *belle dame sans mercy*, the traditional symptoms of love – insomnia, emaciation, trembling, fainting and pallor – could deteriorate into a species of melancholia, leading ultimately to death. Founded as it was, on the precarious coexistence of erotic desire and spiritual aspiration, this conception of love was inherently paradoxical. It was, to quote F.X. Newman, “a love at once illicit and morally elevating, passionate and self-disciplined, humiliating and exalting, human and transcendent.”⁶⁴

Courtly love sometimes proved to be a prelude to marriage and a beneficial force, creating social cohesion and oiling the wheels of social intercourse. However, as stated earlier, it was understood that love could be physically and psychologically harmful because – according to contemporary medical opinion – an all-absorbing passion, if thwarted, could degenerate into the malady of love-melancholy or *amor hereos*, leading to madness and even to death.⁶⁵ This pessimistic view of love informs Spanish 15th-century poetry and sentimental romances such as Diego de San Pedro's *Cárcel de amor* (1492). For a popular ‘scientific’ account of this malady, one may consult Bernard Gordon's *Lilio medicinae*, completed in Montpellier in 1305, a work that was translated into Spanish and published in 1495.⁶⁶ By the late 15th century the symptoms were so well known that readers of the *Celestina* would immediately have recognized in the conduct and words of Calisto a parody of the typical courtly lover; even Calisto's servants knew well how to mimic their master.⁶⁷ The existence of parody presupposes a reading public intimately familiar with such matters and capable of enjoying the joke. Sentimental romances in particular “provided the standard by which upper-class Spaniards measured their

64 Roger Boase, “Arab Influences on European Love-Poetry,” in *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, ed. Salma Khadra Jayyusi (Leiden: 1992), 459–60.

65 The term *amor hereos* derives etymologically from a confusion of the Greek *eros*, god of love, with the Latin *heros*, “hero,” combined with the constrictive associations of passionate love in the Arabic word *‘ishq*; see John Livingston Lowes, “The Lovers Maladye of Hereos,” *Modern Philology* 11 (1913–14): 491–546; and Boase, *Origin and Meaning*, 132–33.

66 “E dizeze hereos porque los ricos e los nobles, por los muchos plazerres que han, acosumbran de caer o incurrir en esta pasión [...] devedes de saber que el amor que hereos se dize es propria pasión del cerebro e es por causa de la corrupción de la imaginativa” (Bernard Gordonio, *Lilio de medicina: Un manual básico de medicina medieval*, ed. John Cull and Brian Dutton [Madison: 1991], 107–09).

67 June Hall Martin, *Love's Fools: Aucassin, Troilus, Calisto and the Parody of the Courtly Lover* (London: 1972), 71–134.

emotional lives, and while we must not fall into the error of assuming that this literature reflected the reality of the times, there is no doubt that life to some extent copied literature, as it always does.”⁶⁸

It was in the imitation of literature that love became a game that was played at court in jousting, dance, amatory conversation, card games, chess, and other pastimes. As John Stevens says with reference to the early English Tudor court, courtly love was “a social fiction,” “a gospel of leisure and pleasure” and a private “game” played out in public.⁶⁹ Play as a cultural phenomenon is hard to define. But, drawing upon the thoughts of Johan Huizinga⁷⁰ and Roger Caillois,⁷¹ I believe that one may discern four important ingredients in both courtly life and literature: an element of make-believe, escapism or play-acting, creating a collective and immersive experience which was intensified in the late Middle Ages by the existence of royal and aristocratic patronage and by the emergence of a growing leisure class obsessed by chivalric ideals at a time when rapid changes in the nature of society were making such ideals increasingly archaic and irrelevant;⁷² an exposure to uncertainty or risk (hence the etymology of the words “play” and “pledge” from the Anglo-Saxon *plegan*) such as one finds in gambling, jousting and other hazardous sports; an element of rivalry (what Huizinga calls “the agonistic principle”) creating tension, suspense and excitement which could take the form of a challenge or a riddle; and the willing commitment to abide by a code of rules, however arbitrary they may seem, expressed in a specialized language only readily understood by the initiated.⁷³

In varying degrees all these elements of risk, secrecy, rivalry, emulation, and make-believe may be found in the ideology of courtly love, and most court entertainments were informed by this ethos. There was an element of risk because there were numerous hurdles, both internal and external, to overcome. The outcome was uncertain, especially if the lady were married; and finally there was an element of conflict or rivalry, not merely against obstacles introduced by the lady or by social inhibitions, but against other competitors. Furthermore, as in most games, there were prizes to be won, although it is a matter of debate – not only among modern critics, but in courtly literature

68 Alan D. Deyermond, *A Literary History of Spain: The Middle Ages* (London: 1971), 162.

69 *Music and Poetry in the Early Tudor Court* (London: 1961), 154–55, 187.

70 *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture*, trans. George Steiner (Boston: 1955).

71 *Les jeux et les hommes* (Paris: 1958).

72 This, in a nutshell, is the thesis of my book *The Troubadour Revival* (London: 1978).

73 Boase, *Origin and Meaning*, 103–07.

itself – whether it was permissible to demand, or even to expect, any sexual favors.⁷⁴

The courtier was a member of a closed community in which – during his leisure hours and in mixed company – he was expected to play a clearly defined role, namely that of an ideal lover. This meant that he had to follow a set of prescribed rules with a specific goal in mind: to win the love of the lady whom he had chosen to serve, or at least to convey the impression that this was his objective. He could achieve this by means of deeds of valor in war or sport, or in his skill as a poet or musician. In poetry, for example, he had to display virtuosity (*agudeza*) by working within self-imposed restrictions, confining himself to certain narrow formal requirements of diction, rhyme and meter which often resulted in obscurity, or deliberate ambiguity. This concealment enabled him to adhere to the courtly principle of discretion while at the same conveying his meaning in coded language.⁷⁵ I should add that, as in many popular riddles, ambiguity could sometimes be a method of teasing the reader or listener into perceiving sexual connotations when an innocent explanation would later become evident. Keith Whinnom coined a label for this procedure: “la defraudación del lector.”⁷⁶ Formal limitations were also a central feature of *preguntas y respuestas*, a genre in which the poet would ask a question, often about the nature of love. The challenge for other poets was to reply using the same structure and rhyme scheme.

The courtly lover's choice of suffering in preference to immediate gratification would seem to invalidate Freud's theory of the “pleasure principle.” As Arthur Koestler says, “the sex drive in the Freudian system is essentially something to be gotten rid of – through the proper channels or by sublimation; pleasure is derived not from its pursuit, but from getting rid of it.”⁷⁷ In my opinion, it is a mistake to draw an artificial distinction between pleasure and desire, or between enjoying and wanting. There are many activities, most of which can be classed as play, which involve agitation of a pleasurable kind. This was understood by the Portuguese philosopher and physician León Hebreo (a.k.a. Judah Abravanel) who, in his *Dialoghi d'amore* composed in Genoa in 1502,

74 See Boase, “Courtly Love in Spanish Literature: A Continuing Debate,” *Journal of Hispanic Philology* 9 (1984): 67–73.

75 See Ian Macpherson, “Secret Language in the *Cancioneros*: Some Courtly Codes,” *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 62 (1985): 51–63; and María Morrás, “La ambivalencia en la poesía de cancionero: Algunos poemas en clave política,” in *Iberia cantat: Estudios sobre poesía hispánica medieval*, ed. Juan Casas Rigall and Eva M^a Díaz Martínez (Santiago de Compostela: 2002), 335–70.

76 *La poesía amoratoria de la época de los Reyes Católicos* (Durham: 1981), 71.

77 *The Act of Creation* (London: 1964), 500.

wrote: "But as for pleasure, its delights consist not in possession nor enjoyment nor complete acquisition, but in a certain tension bound up with privation."⁷⁸ One should add that within a courtly environment, self-restraint was regarded in itself as a mark of refinement, offering an opportunity for social distinction.

Since to reveal a lady's name, or to make a public display of emotion, might place her honour in jeopardy, secrecy was a fundamental precept. It was also familiar to Arab poets such as Ibn Hazm of Cordoba (994–1064): "They say: 'By God, name the one whose love has driven sweet sleep from you!' Yet I will never do so! Before they obtain what they seek, I will lose all my wits and face all misfortunes."⁷⁹ Diego de San Pedro explains this same point in his *Sermón*: "It is proper that what desire constructs in the captured heart should be done upon a foundation of secrecy if it wishes to maintain and finish its work without any danger of shame."⁸⁰ Baldassare Castiglione, in his portrait of the ideal courtier, likewise recommends secrecy.⁸¹

Many poems, above all *canciones*, *motes*, and jousting inscriptions (*letras*), contain the key to the identity of the lady whom the poet or joustier is serving. They sometimes begin with the first letter of her name. The identity of this lady would have been an open secret in the court circles where poems were sung, read, or recited. For example, "Nunca fue pena mayor" (D 0670), the most popular of all 15th-century courtly songs, contains in its first line a cryptic reference to a lady's name. This anonymous poem was set to music in 1476 or 1475 by Johannes Wreede, a Flemish musician in the service of García Álvarez de Toledo (ca. 1424–1488), the first Duke of Alba, and it may have been performed as part of the evening entertainments that took place during the course of the splendid tournament organized by the duke in honor of the Catholic Monarchs in the first week of April 1475. The words were probably written by Tapia a year or two earlier at the request of the duke's fifth son García de Toledo, Lord of La Horcajada, for his wife Mayor de Toledo (daughter of Gutierre de Solís, Count of Coria), expressing García's bitterness that she had deceived him by having an affair with his elder brother Fadrique, who succeeded as duke in 1488.⁸²

78 *The Philosophy of Love*, trans. Friedeberg-Seeley and Barnes (London: 1937), 19.

79 *The Ring of the Dove*, trans. A.J. Arberry (London: 1953), 174.

80 "Pues luego conviene que lo que edificar el desseo en el corazón cativo, sea sobre cimientto del secreto, si quisiere su labor sostener y acabar sin peligro de verguënça" (*Obras completas de Diego de San Pedro*, ed. Keith Whinnom [Madrid: 1971–73], 1:174).

81 "Però se 'l nostro cortegian volesse usar del mio consiglio, io lo confortarei a tener secreti gli amori suoi" (Baldassare Castiglione, *Il libro del cortegiano*, ed. Giulio Preti [Turin: 1965], 3:lxvii, 295).

82 Boase, *Secrets*, 510–33.

The guessing game of half-concealing one lady's name (or the names of several ladies) within a short poem is a characteristic feature of poetry composed during Isabel's reign, and one that deserves more critical attention.⁸³ Take, for example, a *mote* by Soria, which is prefaced by an explanatory rubric: *Otro mote en qu'está metido un nombre d'una señora llamada Teresa*: "Meterés a mí en cuidado" ("You will cause me anxiety").⁸⁴ In an allegorical poem entitled *Castillo de Amor*⁸⁵ – clearly a symbol of embattled chastity – Jorge Manrique proclaims the name of the lady to whom, as a *vasallo hidalgo* (line 113), he pledges his love and in whose service he hopes to acquire more worth or merit (*más valer*). Her name is displayed on the flag that flies above the castle keep (*torre de homenaje*): a name like *más*, a surname like *valer*. The riddle remains unresolved: possibly the lady's name was Mayor de Valera. In the *canción* "¡Guay d'aquel que nunca atiende!"⁸⁶ Jorge Manrique reveals the name of his wife Guiomar in acrostics; in "Según el mal [que] me siguió,"⁸⁷ he manages to conceal the name Guiomar and the four branches of her ancestry – Castañeda, Ayala, Silva and Meneses – within the space of five stanzas. The final stanza explains that by joining the first name with the last name mentioned, the reader will discover the identity of the lady who holds him captive, namely Guiomar de Meneses.⁸⁸ Luis de Tovar surpasses this feat by concealing the names of nine ladies in eight lines, including the name of the lady whom he serves, Francina,⁸⁹ which is given in acrostics.⁹⁰ Much of the fun of these riddles seems to have been to communicate the lady's name to a circle of initiates without compromising her honor, which means that the lover had to "know how to negotiate the fine line between concealment and display."⁹¹ A threat to contravene the precept of secrecy was even used by some poets, such as Juan de Mena and Jorge Manrique, as a form of sexual blackmail, which is why Diego de San Pedro issues this warning to young gentlemen about the damage they

83 Ian Macpherson, "Secret Language in the *Cancioneros*: Some Courtly Codes," *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 62 (1985): 51–63.

84 ID 6867; IICG-630.

85 ID 6152; IICG-198.

86 ID 6147; IICG-194.

87 ID 6156; IICG-202.

88 In his first line he pays tribute to one of Juan de Mena's finest poems, "¡Guay d'aquel ombre que mira!" (ID 0006; Mena 1979: no. 11), written around 1447 in praise of the court lady Inés de Torres.

89 Probably Francina de Centelles, the wife of Jaime de Centelles and mistress of Luis de Tovar (d. 1507) (Boase, *Secrets*, 326).

90 ID 6583; IICG-811.

91 Aurora Hermida Ruiz, "Silent Subtexts and *Cancionero* Codes: On Garcilaso de la Vega's Revolutionary Love," in *Poets at Court*, ed. Gerli and Weiss, 87.

can inflict on a lady's honor: "Gentleman, be careful to avoid a mistake that young men follow in the rules of courting, beginning their jousting inscriptions, or crests, or embroidered hems with the first letter of the name of the lady whom they serve, because this type of courtesy is a public proclamation that may destroy their reputation."⁹²

Courtly love is a game and a battle in which, paradoxically, one wins by losing because the lover submits to the will of his lady and becomes her captive. This point is well illustrated in a poem by Garci Sánchez de Badajoz in which – having been defeated by his *amiga* at a game of cards – he declares that gazing at her caused him to lose himself. However, he is happy to lose his freedom and his life for her sake.⁹³ In another poem by this poet addressed to four ladies and resembling a game of forfeits, he asks the one who has caught his heart in her net to return it to him without making him a laughing stock by revealing the secret.⁹⁴ Similarly, when the Count of Urueña, Juan Téllez-Girón, is persuaded to switch his allegiance from Juana *la Beltraneja* (the putative daughter of Enrique IV's Portuguese wife by his favorite Beltrán de la Cueva) to Queen Isabel by marrying Leonor de la Vega, the daughter of the Constable of Castile, he celebrates his marriage on 22 May 1476 by wearing on his jousting crest the laurel wreath of victory as a symbol of one who has been vanquished by love: "The others as conquerors / have worn the laurel, / I alone [do so] as one well conquered."⁹⁵

Finally, there is the example of the famous *canción* "D'estas aves su nación" by Gerónimo Pinar's sister Florencia Pinar, who was the only noteworthy female poet in 15th-century Spain.⁹⁶ The majority of critics have failed to appreciate that the rubric – which explains that the poem is addressed to some partridges received as a gift – must have been added later during the editorial process. This means that the poem is a riddle which, like her brother's *Juego trobado*, must be decrypted. The reader or listener has to guess the species of birds from the key words *perdiendo alegría*: *perder* and *perdiz* are near homonyms, expressing Florencia's sense of loss, while the word *alegría* alludes to the idiom "Más feliz que una perdiz." Without falling into the anachronism

92 "Guardaos, señores, de una erronía que en la ley enamorada tienen los galanes, comenzando en la primera letra de los nombres de la que sirven sus invenciones o cimeras o bordaduras, porque semejante gentileza es un pregón con que se haze justicia de la infamia dellas" (Whinnom, *Obras*, 1:175–76).

93 ID 6849; 14CG-448.

94 ID 0718; LB1–30.

95 "Los otros por vencedores / l'han traído, / yo sólo por bien vencido" (ID 0938; LB1–255, 11CG-534); Boase, *Secrets*, 678.

96 See Boase, *Secrets*, 723–34.

of ascribing to the poet-narrator a post-Romantic sensibility (a danger that Barbara Weissberger warns against),⁹⁷ it seems clear that her personality as a woman is not totally eclipsed by her skill in imitating her male counterparts. She empathizes with the caged birds because she herself feels trapped: the birds are the visual embodiment of her experience of love as a sense of impotence and loss. In contradistinction to the sentiments so often expressed by male poets, there is nothing triumphant in this loss. Through a close reading of her poetry – and in view of the symbolism of the partridge in bestiary lore and the existence of a concealed allusion to goshawks – this poem can be understood as an indirect criticism of male sexual aggression as well as an expression of female sexual desire.

It would be a mistake to imagine that the courtly love tradition greatly improved the status of women, although it did encourage men to treat women – whether married or unmarried – with more respect. As Edith Feistner reminds us in an article on medieval German literature: “The man can *play* at being the servant only because in reality he is not the servant but the lord, while the woman can *play* at being the dominant lady only because this is permitted her by the fiction of male subordination and because the man controls the rules of the game.”⁹⁸ During the reign of Isabel of Castile every woman (with the exception of the queen) was subject to the authority of a father, a husband, or the Church. No one in the service of the queen, whether male or female, could marry or even travel without her permission. In theory, according to Christian canon law – as in Roman law – marriage was considered invalid without mutual consent. For example, in *Las siete partidas* it is clearly stated that consent alone is what makes a marriage valid: “only consent, with the willingness to marry, makes a matrimony between man and woman.”⁹⁹

In reality, the ladies of the court had little to say with regard to such matters because their marriages were arranged by the queen, usually with a view to healing family rivalries or strengthening political alliances. In noble families throughout Europe it was customary for couples to be betrothed at a very young age, and there was little chance of resisting the will of their parents.¹⁰⁰ This did not mean, however, that love and marriage were necessarily

97 Barbara Weissberger, “La crítica y Florencia Pinar,” in *Literatura y feminismo en España* (s. xv-xxi), ed. Lisa Vollendorf (Barcelona: 2005), 43–58.

98 Cited in James A. Schultz, *Courtly Love, the Love of Courtliness, and the History of Sexuality* (Chicago: 2006), 184–85.

99 “consentimiento sólo, con voluntad de casar, faze matrimonio entre el varón y la muger” (*Siete partidas*, vol. 4, título 2, ley 5).

100 See Christopher N.L. Brooke, *The Medieval Idea of Marriage* (Oxford: 1998), 129.

incompatible. Many jousting *invenciones* were addressed to women whom the jousts would marry, or had already married, and the same is true of many *canciones*. Although the Church did not permit divorce, a husband (if he was a grandee) could often manufacture an annulment by means of a papal bull on the grounds that his marriage had been within the forbidden degrees of kinship or had never been consummated. But if a lady wished to repudiate her husband or avoid marrying her suitor, or if she became a widow, her best option was to withdraw from the world in order to lead a cloistered life.

Many of the courtly songs composed in the Iberian Peninsula in the 15th century have, I believe, a political aspect inasmuch as they were an integral part of a serious game of courtship played out by the competing royal and aristocratic families of Castile, Portugal, Aragon, Navarre, and the Kingdom of Naples. Marriage and patronage were the keys to political power, creating a network of alliances linking the monarchy and the nobility. It was chiefly by arranging marriages and conferring noble titles that in each country the royal family sought to retain control over the rebellious magnates and win their support. These were occasions for festivities, jousting, poetry, and song. By the same process magnates, in their turn, could exert power over rulers. It was in the interests of the queen to emulate in magnificence the courts of magnates and to lure her noble subjects away from the dangerous pastimes of conspiracy and rebellion; they in turn sought to ingratiate themselves by writing or commissioning poems in praise of ladies at the royal court. In a time when families were often divided in their political loyalties, games and entertainments served as a means of affirming or reaffirming ties of kinship and fealty. Courtly love could serve as a cohesive force against the real threat of anarchy.

As Victoria Burrus rightly says, courtly love was not antithetical to marriage. But within the framework of the game, it was an unspoken rule that marriage should not be mentioned as a solution.¹⁰¹ As Juan Álvarez Gato explained to a lady whom he was courting, who suggested that they marry, constraint is incompatible with true love, "since true love / requires neither pressure, nor force."¹⁰² These words echo those of the early Provençal poet Bernart de Ventadorn: "In love man does not have lordship."¹⁰³ Similarly, Arveragus (the Franklin in

101 "Role Playing in the Amatory Poetry of the *Cancioneros*," in *Poets at Court*, ed. Gerli and Weiss, 131, note 27. A rare exception to this rule is a poem by Alfonso Álvarez de Villasandino (ca. 1345–1425), composed long before Queen Isabel's reign, in which he celebrates his love for his last wife, Mayor (PN1–5), and wishes to remain hers "in equal degree"; see Boase, *Secrets*, 518–21.

102 "pues amor verdadero / no quiere premia ni fuerça" (ID 3094; MH2–27).

103 "Mas en amor non a om senhoratge" (*The Songs of Bernart de Ventadorn*, ed. Stephen G. Nichols, Jr. and John A. Galm [Chapel Hill, NC: 1962], no. 42, lines 15–17).

Chaucer's *The Frankeleyns Tale*) – applying courtly principles to marriage – secretly swears as a knight to obey his lady and follow her will in everything, because “Love wol nat been constreyned by maistry.”¹⁰⁴ The man plays the role of vassal or slave to the lady to whom he has pledged his love. Although that love is freely given, the psychological sense of constraint becomes one of the main themes of poetry and amorous conversation, a theme well illustrated in the *Cárcel de amor* (Seville 1492), a sentimental romance that was translated into many languages and became an international best-seller.¹⁰⁵

To illustrate this point, one need only consider a jousting poem¹⁰⁶ accompanied by an image of a prison grill which King Fernando displayed at a tournament in Seville on 11 September 1478.¹⁰⁷ In this *invención* the king set an example to others by proclaiming that any imprisonment or loss of freedom is justified if it is endured for the sake of the greatest, best, and most beautiful person in the world, “la mayor y mejor / del mundo, y la más hermosa” – by which he meant, of course, his wife Isabel, with whom he ruled Castile (1475) and Aragon (1479) jointly.

3 The Game of Chess, Isabel's Messianic Role, and Sumptuary Laws

Queen Isabel had been brought up to believe that, in restoring law and order, suppressing heresy and conquering Granada, she was fulfilling a divine mission. Like Elizabeth I of England a century later, she knew that it served her political purposes to model her conduct on that of the stereotypical chaste and courtly lady. By so doing, she could instill mixed emotions of fear and devotion, more easily commanding the willing obedience not only of those in her

104 Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Works*, ed. F.N. Robinson (London: 1933), 163, line 764. This idea of submission to the beloved, even in marriage, was expressed by many of the sultans of Córdoba. Amir al-Hakam I (ruled 796–822) wrote: “Excessive love has made me a slave” (A.R. Nykl, *Hispano-Arabic Poetry and its Relations with the Old Provençal Troubadours* [Baltimore: 1946], 21); and ‘Abd al-Rahmân V (ruled 1023–24), speaking of his marriage to his cousin Habîba, wrote: “I have stipulated as a condition [of marriage] that I shall serve her as a slave and that I have conveyed my soul to her as my dowry” (Boase, “Arab Influences,” 468). The first European king to behave in this fashion was probably Wenzel IV of Bohemia (ruled 1363–1419), the eccentric King Wenceslas, who celebrated his love for his wife Sophia Euphemia by depicting himself as a prisoner in the stocks within the initial W (Josef Krása, *Die Handschriften König Wenzels* [Prague: 1971], 23–114).

105 Véronique Duché-Gavet, “Si du mont Pyrenée / N’eussent passé le haut fait ...” (*Les romans sentimentaux traduits de l’espagnol en France au XVII^e siècle* [Paris: 2008]).

106 ID 0915; IICG-481.

107 Boase, *Secrets*, 635–38.

immediate entourage, but even of the populace at large. Furthermore, this cult of courtly adulation tempered the arrogance of men trained as soldiers and inspired them to fight bravely in the name of love. This last point is mentioned by the Venetian ambassador Andrea Navagiero who describes how, when the queen and her retinue of ladies appeared on the battlefield near Granada, they breathed courage into every heart:

There was scarce a cavalier who was not in love with one of the queen's ladies. Being present, these ladies were reliable witnesses to each man's achievements, frequently handing them their weapons as they went out to do battle, and frequently offering several a token of favor, and perhaps at times uttering words of encouragement, and beseeching them to make known by their conduct the degree of their passion. There is surely no man so base, so weak-hearted or so lacking in strength who would not have vanquished the stoutest adversary, or who would not sooner have dared to lose his life a thousand times, than return dishonored to the lady of his love. One can therefore truthfully say that this war was chiefly won through love.¹⁰⁸

The commanding personality of Queen Isabel had a revolutionary impact on another kind of warfare, namely the game of chess: it was during her reign that the modern rules of the game, in which the queen becomes the most powerful piece on the board, were first introduced. It is almost certain that she knew how to play the game because it was said that King Fernando used to spend more time than he should on games of all kinds, notably chess, *pelota* (a ball game probably played wearing gloves, like fives or volleyball), and *tablas* (a form of backgammon).¹⁰⁹ It is known that the queen's childhood friend Beatriz de Bobadilla (1440–1511), Marquesa de Moya, used to play chess: it was while she was playing this game with Álvaro de Portugal, President of the Royal Council, in the summer of 1487 in a tent outside the walls of the besieged city of Málaga, that they were assaulted by a Muslim dervish, Ibrahim Algerbi, who mistook them for the king and queen.¹¹⁰ One of the first books about chess in which the new rules are discussed was Luis de Lucena's *Arte de axedrez con CL juegos de partido*, a work dedicated to Prince Juan and printed in Salamanca only a few weeks after the prince's sudden death in that city on 4 October

108 *Il Viaggio fatto in Spagna et in Francia* (Venice: 1563), fol. 27.

109 "Placiale jugar todos los juegos, de pelota e ajedrez, e en esto gastaba algún tiempo más de lo que debía" (Pulgar, *Crónica*, 1:259).

110 William Thomas Walsh, *Isabella of Spain* (London: 1931), 391.

1497.¹¹¹ In his analysis of chess games, Lucena distinguishes between “axedrez al viejo,” the old way of playing, and “axedrez de la dama,” the new way of playing. There is evidence, however, that the earliest book on the new form of the game is a work in Valencian by Francesch Vicent: *Llibre dels jochs partits dels scachs*, printed in Valencia on 15 May 1495 by Lope de Roca Alamany and Pere Trincher.¹¹² But although the work is recorded in several library catalogues, it is now lost. A game of chess between Francesc de Castellví and Narcís Vinyoles, judged by Bernat Fenollar, that took place on 25 March 1474 (nine months before Queen Isabel’s coronation) and which is described in the poem *Scachs d’amor*,¹¹³ is proof that the modern game actually originated in Valencia. There is plausible evidence, according to Jerónimo Miguel Briongos, that these three Valencian poets were friends of Luis de Lucena’s father Juan Ramírez de Lucena and that the latter, who was sent as an ambassador to France by Juan II of Aragon in 1473, secretly supported the interests of Fernando and Isabel even before their marriage in 1469.¹¹⁴

The majority of court poets who addressed laudatory poems to the queen were of *converso* origins. This is especially true in the early years of her reign (1474–80) before the Spanish Inquisition became active, when poets such as Antón de Montoro (1404–1477), Diego de Valera (1412–1488), Juan Álvarez Gato (1440–1509), Fray Íñigo de Mendoza (ca. 1449–ca. 1508)¹¹⁵ and his cousin Pedro de Cartagena (1456–1486),¹¹⁶ who felt insecure as a result of a rising tide of anti-Semitism, gave her a redemptive and messianic role, looking to her for protection, and anticipating under her rule a period of greater security and tolerance.¹¹⁷ Cartagena, in “De otras reynas diferente,”¹¹⁸ warns the queen to silence those who extol her virtues lest they fall into idolatry. But he exposes himself to this same charge when, a few lines later, he describes her as a woman without defect, the first on earth and the second in heaven – by which he means that

111 Joaquín Pérez de Arriaga, *El incunable de [Luis de] Lucena: Primer arte de ajedrez moderno* (Madrid: 1997).

112 See José A. Garzón, *En pos del incunable perdido. Francesc Vicent: Llibre dels jochs partits del scachs, Valencia, 1495* (Valencia: 1999).

113 This game was printed in *Obres e trobes* (Valencia: ca. 1475); see Ricardo Calvo, *El poema Scachs d’amor (siglo xv): Primer texto conservado sobre ajedrez moderno* (Madrid: 1999).

114 Govert Westerveld, *The Poem “Scachs d’amor” (1475): First Text of Modern Chess* (self-published via Lulu.com: 2015), vii.

115 Boase, *Secrets*, 709.

116 Boase, *Secrets*, 459–60.

117 R.O. Jones, “Isabel la Católica y el amor cortés,” *Revista de Literatura* 21 (1962): 55–64; Gregory B. Kaplan, “In Search of Salvation: The Deification of Isabel La Católica in *Converso* Poetry,” *Hispanic Review* 66 (1998): 289–308.

118 ID 6120; IICG-153.

only the Virgin Mary could be ranked above her. Montoro goes further and addresses a *canción* of eulogy to the queen (“Alta reyna soberana”),¹¹⁹ for which he is publicly rebuked by Francisco Vaca.¹²⁰ In this poem he dares to suggest that, had the queen been born before Mary, God would have chosen her as Christ’s mother. Similarly, Diego de Valera (1412–1488), in a letter addressed to the queen in 1479 after the Portuguese troops had been repulsed, draws a parallel between the redemptive mission of the Virgin Mary and that of the queen:

One can truly say that just as Our Lord wished that our glorious lady should be born into this world and that from her should proceed the universal Redeemer of the human race, so He determined that you, my lady, should be born in order to reform and restore these realms and remove them from the tyrannical rule that they have for so long experienced.¹²¹

Fray Íñigo de Mendoza, in his *Dechado del regimiento de príncipes* (1475), gives the queen advice on how she should be vigilant lest her court ladies behave in an immodest way. In his *Coplas de Vita Christi*,¹²² he denounces the immoral conduct of courtiers. However, he himself took part in jousting and other courtly entertainments and wrote much light and amatory verse. Indeed, criticism for his participation in such worldly activities was levelled against him by several of his contemporaries, including Vázquez de Palencia¹²³ (who calls him a wolf in sheep’s clothing) and Cartagena, who wrote a poem of reproof at King Fernando’s request.¹²⁴ One anonymous poet rebukes him for asking favors from ladies and addressing songs to them.¹²⁵ Another, the author of the

119 ID 6105; 16RE-118.

120 ID 6104; 11CG-127.

121 “Bien se puede con verdad desir, que así como Nuestro Señor quiso en este mundo nasciese la gloriosa Señora nuestra, porque della procediese el universal Redentor del linaje humano, así determinó, vos, Señora, nasciédeses para reformar e restaurar estos reinos e sacarlos de la tiránica governación en que tan luengamente han estado” (Valera, *Tratado de las epístolas* [Madrid: 1959], 17).

122 “Pues, reina, debéis mandar / y enfrenar / el uso de vuestra corte, [...]. Non reprocho yo el danzar / e bailar / en los tiempos de las fiestas, / mas con estas e sin estas / muy honestas / deben las damas andar / sin burlar ni apartar” (cited in Álvaro Fernández de Córdova Miralles, *La Corte de Isabel I: Ritos y ceremonias de una reina* [1474–1504] [Madrid: 2002], 126). The first version of the *Vita Christi* was completed around 1467–68; it was first printed in Zamora in 1482.

123 ID 2908; 11CG-814.

124 ID 6113; 11CG-141.

125 “no pedir favor a damas, / no servir las con canciones, / no encenderos en sus flamas” (ID 4342; PN11C-9; cf. ID 2995, 11CG-815).

satirical *Aposentamiento que se hizo en Júbera* (ca. 1473–74), chides him for not following the strict rules of his order;¹²⁶ and nine amusing anecdotes illustrating his wit and his lax morals are recounted in Alonso de Fuentes, *Miscelánea de anécdotas y curiosos casos* (ms. ca. 1540).¹²⁷

Although the queen was rigorous about morals and disapproved of extravagance, she recognized the need for ostentatious display of wealth on ceremonial occasions, especially in the presence of foreign dignitaries. Her official chronicler Fernando de Pulgar defends her against those who would criticize her love of pomp and finery by arguing that her royal status gives her divine authority and requires that she should outshine all those of lower rank.¹²⁸ For example, when her daughter, Princess Isabel, was wedded by proxy to Prince Afonso in Seville in 1490 in the presence of ambassadors from Portugal, France, England, Scotland, and Burgundy, the queen wore a velvet skirt covered in golden fern leaves. The knights of the realm wore gold and silk, and her 70 court ladies were dressed in gold jewellery and pearls.¹²⁹ After the jousting, bullfighting, and jousting with reeds (*juegos de cañas*) there was banqueting and dancing by torch-light late into the night.

The queen nevertheless expected her court ladies to dress with decorum in accordance with their status and in a manner appropriate to the occasion. When a member of the royal family died, games were forbidden at court, as was the playing of profane music, and ladies and gentlemen had to wear sackcloth for three months.¹³⁰ The anonymous author of the obscene *Carajicomedia* mentions that Isabel Osorio de Quiñones, sister of the Marquis of Astorga, incurred the queen's displeasure when she wore gold and silk in Toledo in 1498 – which led to the introduction of a sumptuary law in 1499 regulating the production, sale, and wearing of silk that remained in force until it was suspended after the arrival of Philip the Fair in 1506.¹³¹

126 “frayle honrrado y gran dotor, / no de regla muy estrecha” (ID 2999; IICG-965, lines 326–27).

127 Víctor de Lama, “Los amores reales de Fray Íñigo de Mendoza,” *Revista de Literatura Medieval* 16 (2004): 81–94, at 90.

128 *Crónica de los Reyes Católicos*, ed. Juan de Mata Carriazo (Madrid: 1943), 178.

129 María Jesús Díez Garretas, “Fiestas y juegos cortesanos en el reinado de los Reyes Católicos: Divisas, motes y momos,” *Revista de historia Jerónimo Zurita* 74 (1999): 163–74, at 166, stanza 50.

130 See Margarita Cabrera Sánchez, “Funerales regioes en la Castilla bajomedieval,” *Acta historica et archaeologica mediaevalia* 22 (2001): 537–64.

131 *Carajicomedia: Texto facsimilar*, ed. Carlos Varo (Madrid: 1981), 188.

4 Jousting and Heraldic *Invinciones*

The minimalist art of the jousting *invención* offers us a key to interpret many aspects of court culture in Spain during the 15th century, revealing information about historical events that are ignored or scarcely mentioned in chronicles and other official sources, and offering us insight into the mindset of the ruling elite. The *Juego trobado* is itself one extended *invención* in which there are two pictorial elements, a plant and a bird, instead of a single *divisa*; and two verbal elements, a song and proverb, instead of a single *letra*. The riddle of each person's identity can only be fully elucidated by means of these four lots or clues. Although there has been a growing interest in *invenciones* following the publication of critical editions of the texts by Ian Macpherson¹³² and John Gornall,¹³³ the interpretation of these works is still in its infancy. The history of jousting during the reign of the Catholic Monarchs remains to be written. It has not been fully established where and when all the tournaments took place, nor do we know when and where each *invención* was displayed.¹³⁴

Technically, King Fernando's *invención* (cited earlier) is a poor example of the genre because the text and the image are not closely interlinked. In the finest examples of this genre, the *divisa*, the emblem or image, and the *letra*, an inscription – usually in one, two, or three octosyllabic lines – are interdependent and complementary: “The object [...] was to express an idea, or an emotion, as concisely and economically as possible, ideally by drawing attention to a hitherto unsuspected relationship between image and word.”¹³⁵ By means of this paradoxical juxtaposition of visual and verbal elements, an individual can demonstrate his wit or *ingenio*. In some respects, it resembles the Baroque conceit, except that the subtlest *invenciones* can only be deciphered when they are simultaneously read, heard, and seen.¹³⁶ The visual component of the *invención* may take the form of an elaborate crest (*cimera*) attached to the jousting helmet or a striking emblem (*divisa*) embroidered on his garments, his scabbard, or the trappings of his horse. The verbal component (the *letra*) was displayed on small wooden boards (*rótulos*), or on cloth draperies (*paramentos*), or on scraps of paper distributed to the spectators. Because the

132 *The Invenciones and Letras of the Cancionero General* (London: 1998).

133 *The “Invenciones” of the British Library “Cancionero,”* ed. Jane Whetnall (London: 2003).

134 I have attempted to fill in a few of the gaps in Boase, *Secrets*, 628–722.

135 Macpherson, “The Game of Courtly Love: *Letra*, *Divisa* and *Invención* at the Court of the Catholic Monarchs,” in *Poets at Court*, ed. Gerli and Weiss, 104.

136 “Fernando de Acuña, María Dávila and the Minimalist Art of the *Invención*,” *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 95 (2018): 491–500.

visual component of most of these compositions has not been preserved in contemporary woodcuts or drawings, one is bound to rely on the rubrics found in the *Cancionero general* (1511), the Portuguese *Cancioneiro geral* (1516), and the manuscript known as the *British Library Cancionero* (LB1). Since these were almost certainly added by a later hand – the compiler's or editor's – they can sometimes be misleading.¹³⁷

From the evidence of certain sentimental romances, *invenciones* were also displayed at indoor festivities. For example, in Diego de San Pedro's *Tractado de amores de Arnalte a* [sic] *Luçenda* (Burgos: 1491), a work dedicated to the ladies of the court completed between 1481 and 1483, there is a description of a masked ball, in which the hero Arnalte displays on his cloak some embroidered sprigs of sesame (which were the emblem of Esteban de Guzmán, Lord of Orgaz) with a *letra*, indicating that he – and by implication the author – seeks to perpetuate the latter's memory without actually mentioning his name: "This [person], more sad than any man, / who dies because he does not die, / will live when he may live / without his name."¹³⁸ This *letra*, which opens with the first two syllables of Esteban and with *hombre* (Spanish for "man") within the context of the story of Arnalte, helps to explain the meaning of an *invención* attributed to Esteban de Guzmán (ca. 1470–1512) in the *Cancionero general*: "I looked for her in life, / and in death I found her."¹³⁹ In each line the weak pronoun *la* refers to the *divisa* of embroidered sesame, which in Spanish is *sésamo* or *alegría*.¹⁴⁰ It may be inferred that Esteban first caught sight of his future wife Isabel de Borbón (d. 1543) when she attended the funeral of her father Lorenzo Suárez de Figueroa, first Count of Coruña, who died in Guadalajara on 21 May 1481, so that Esteban did indeed find her in death. At the same time, it is hinted that he also finds her and his happiness (*alegría*) in the *piccola morte* of sexual union. Furthermore, a sprig of sesame is found in the coat of arms of Esteban's

137 See Cleofé Tato, "De rúbricas y cancioneros," in *Vir bonus docendi peritus: Homenaxe a José Pérez Riesco* (A Coruña: 2002), 451–70; Patrizia Botta, "La rubricación cancioneril de las letras de justadores," in *Dejar hablar a los textos: Homenaje a Francisco Márquez Villanueva*, ed. Pedro M. Piñero Ramírez (Seville: 2005), 1:173–92; Kirstin Kennedy, "Do *Cancionero* Rubrics Help Solve *Invenciones*?" in *Proceedings of the Thirteenth Colloquium*, ed. Jane Whetnall and Alan Deyermond, Publications of the Medieval Hispanic Research Seminar 51 (London: 2006), 137–46; and Óscar Perea Rodríguez, "Las rúbricas cancioneriles y la identificación de poetas de los siglos xv y xvi," in *Rumbos del hispanismo en el umbral del Cincuentenario de la AIH*, ed. Aviva Garriba (Rome: 2012), 288–95.

138 "Éste, triste más que hombre, / que muere porque no muere, / biviirá quando biviere / sin su nombre" (ID 7846; MN53–10, 91AL–06).

139 "En la vida la busqué, / y en la muerte la hallé" (ID 0943; HCG–520, LB1–260).

140 Macpherson, "Game of Courtly Love," 107.

maternal grandfather, Alonso Carrillo, Lord of Maqueda, with the motto “Cien mil de melancolía,” meaning that a moment of joy may bring 100,000 years of melancholy.¹⁴¹

These *invenciones* are artifacts of great wit and beauty which are enjoyable in their own right; but without uncovering the historical context, they cannot be appreciated fully.¹⁴² The purpose of most *invenciones* is to perpetuate a person's fame, or that of the lady who inspires him to acts of prowess. For this reason, knowledge of a jousting's personal circumstances – so far as this is possible – is no less important than an acquaintance with the “repertoire of images and conceits familiar to the whole of Western European courtly culture.”¹⁴³

Another point to bear in mind is that the interpretation of *invenciones* is as much a verbal as a visual game. Therefore, one often has to consider the image not merely as a symbol but also as the visual representation of a written word that can be split into parts. Consider the Count of Tendilla's half-sign of Solomon that he displayed on the embroidered hem of his garment with the inscription “He who was fortunate / has taken what is missing here, / and the end remained for me.”¹⁴⁴ It is a mistake to concentrate here on the significance of the Sign of Solomon, or Star of David: one has to look at the letters *SINO* (the contemporary spelling of *signo*), a word that can be split into a *si* and a *no*: the count's rival in love is accepted by the lady, and the count is left with *el fin*, i.e. the end of the word *sino*, because the lady has answered his proposal of love in the negative.

Often the *letra* provides the reader or onlooker with a clue about how to unlock the meaning of the image, as in the following *invención* by Fernando de Acuña (ca. 1456–1495), the future Viceroy of Sicily, addressed to María Dávila, the widow of the royal treasurer Fernán Núñez de Arnalte (d. 1479), a lady whom he married in 1483 by arrangement of the queen: *Hernando de Acuña concerning a key such as they insert on the completion of a work*: “The end before the beginning.”¹⁴⁵ If we place the end of the word (*el fin de la llave*) before the beginning – saying *ave* first – and place the first syllable *la* after it, we discover that the lady's surname is Ávila, while the word *ave* indicates that her name is

141 Fernández de Oviedo, *Batallas*, ed. Pérez de Tudela, 3:390.

142 Boase, “Is Diego de San Pedro's *Tractado de amores a roman à clef*?” in *Poesía, poéticas y cultura literaria*, ed. Andrea Zinato and Paola Bellomi (Como-Pavia: 2018), 13–24; and Boase, *Secrets*, 628–722.

143 Kennedy, “Do *Cancionero* Rubrics,” 144.

144 *El conde de Tendilla sacó en bordadura un medio sino de Salomón, y dixo*: “Llevó quien ovo ventura / lo que fallestes de aquí, / y el fin quedó para mí” (1D 0987; 11CG-519).

145 *Don Hernando d'Acuña a una llave que ponen por acabamiento de la obra*: “Antes el fin qu'el comienço” (1D 6372; 11CG-540); Macpherson, *Invenciones*, no. 60.

María, because the Virgin Mary is addressed with the words *Ave María*. Hence it emerges that the lady's name is María Dávila. If – again, in accordance with the instructions – the last syllable *ve* is placed before *lla*, this could be interpreted as a coded message that the jousting wishes to see the lady (*vella*, or *verla*), which is a polite way of saying that he wants to finish the job, or unlock her door.

One finds a similar technique in an *invención* addressed to Aldonza de Haro, the only child of the poet Diego López de Haro by his first wife, Leonor de Ayala, who died in childbirth in 1473. She married Pedro Laso de Castilla, an illegitimate son of Pedro de Castilla y Fonseca *el Mozo* and Catalina Laso de Mendoza, Duchess of Medinaceli. The *invención* may have been displayed in Zaragoza in the summer of 1498 while the court waited for the queen's eldest daughter to give birth: *Another displayed an A of gold, because his friend was named Aldonza, and said: "Saying what it is and what it is made of, / this, belonging to the person to whom I belong, / tells you what I do."*¹⁴⁶ The *A* is yellow, the color of despair,¹⁴⁷ and the device has to be spoken aloud to elicit answers to a series of questions: "¿Qué es?," "Es un A," "¿De qué?," "Es un A d'oro." The *letra* indicates what he does, which is to adore Aldonça: "Adoro a Aldonça." Gold is a symbol of constancy because it is a metal that does not rust or corrode. The *A* might be in the shape of a hoop or staple (*un aro*), which is the lady's surname (Haro) and a symbol of imprisonment.

A masterpiece of this genre in which the meaning of the *letra* is unlocked through the visual stimulus of the *divisa* is the following compressed and paradoxical *invención* by Juan Manuel. It is a highly original variation on the theme of the "prison of love," and one that was greatly admired by Macpherson: "Seeing you causes what it does; / knowing you [causes] what it says."¹⁴⁸ One cannot decipher this *letra* except by thinking about the hobbles (*suestras*) embroidered on the jousting's garments. The word *suelta* "simultaneously conjures up the notions of restriction and release": it means either a hobble that restrains a horse and prevents it from bolting, or it is the imperative or present indicative of the verb *soltar*, "to release" or "to set free." The hobble is thus the unexpressed subject of the first line: the sight of the lady causes the lover to become a prisoner. This is what it does. But the message expressed by the hobble – what it says – is quite the reverse: "Knowing you would release me." And the

146 *Otro sacó una .a. de oro, porque su amiga avía nombre Aldonça, y dixo: "Diziendo qué es y de qué, / ésta, de quien cuyo só, / dize lo que hago yo"* (ID 0986; ICG-575, cf. LB1-302).

147 See for comparative purposes ID 6363.

148 "Lo que haze, causa veros; / lo que dize, conosceros" (ID 6381; ICG-555); Macpherson, *Invenciones*, no. 75.

onlooker is furthermore invited by the words *causa veros* (seeing you) if they are read as *causa averos* (possessing you) to interpret “knowing” in an erotic sense. One is bound to agree with Macpherson that this *invención* “represents a remarkably condensed piece of wit” and that “the sense is as compelling as the technique.”¹⁴⁹

In order to play this guessing game, some familiarity with heraldic emblems and religious iconography may be necessary. An example of a heraldic *invención* is the following by the joustier Enric de Monteagudo, son of the Chief Justice of Valencia: he displayed on his crest a handful of lances and on the trappings of his horse some gold and crimson lozenges (i.e. diamond shapes) with the points turned inwards, with the words: “Where I lost my liberty / I can do nothing but lose myself, / for if I wish to defend myself, / my arms are against me.”¹⁵⁰ These lozenges belong to the coat of arms of the Montagut family, which is the Catalan form of the Anglo-Norman name Montague.¹⁵¹ There is a pun here on the word *lisonjas*, which may mean either flattering praises or heraldic lozenges. What the joustier means is that in seeking to praise his lady, he succumbs to the malady of love and is captivated by her.

There is an *invención* in the *Cancionero general*,¹⁵² displayed by an unnamed young courtier, which depicts – according to the rubric – a lady half-devoured by a dragon with only her face and half her body visible. The *letra* explains that she is suffering because she gave to one person what is visible and to another what is hidden. I have demonstrated that the *divisa* was inspired by the iconography of St. Margaret of Antioch, one of the most popular virgin-martyrs of the Middle Ages and the patron saint of expectant mothers.¹⁵³ She was the daughter of a pagan priest of Antioch, martyred around 304 A.D. According to the legend, her mother died when she was an infant and her nurse raised her as a Christian. When she resisted the sexual advances of the Roman Governor of Antioch, he denounced her as a Christian and threw her into a dungeon. There she was tortured because she refused to renounce her faith. The devil then appeared in the form of a dragon and swallowed her whole. But she carried a

149 Macpherson, “Game of Love,” 109.

150 “Do la libertad perdí / no puedo sino perderme, / que si quiero defenderme, / mis armas son contra mí” (ID 6393; 11CG-582). Cf. other *invenciones* concerning *lisonjas* in Boase, *Secrets*, 755–57.

151 See Boase, *Secrets*, 755, fig. 59, showing the coat of arms of William de Montague (1301–1344), Earl of Salisbury, King of the Isle of Man.

152 11CG-517.

153 Roger Boase, “The Lady Half-Devoured by a Dragon and the Iconography of St Margaret of Antioch: Interpreting an Anonymous *Invención* in the *Cancionero general* (11CG-517),” *Magnificat Cultura i Literatura Medievals* 5 (2018): 1–17.

cross that irritated its stomach and caused it to spit her out; thus, she emerged unharmed from the dragon's mouth. This is why, in medieval Christian art, she is often depicted with a small cross trampling on a dead dragon, or else rising out of the dragon's mouth – a symbol of liberation from the sins of the world. The author of the rubric failed to understand that the dragon is spitting her out, not swallowing her. In this *invención*, the traditional image of St. Margaret has been totally reinvented: the chaste martyr has been transformed into a martyr of promiscuous love who offers the upper part of her body to one man and her lower half to another.

This is a rare example of an *invención* in which a lady is reprimanded for her lax morals. It may be inferred from a passage in a treatise on women's dress by Hernando de Talavera (1428–1507), Queen Isabel's confessor, completed around 1477, that this device must have been displayed at the tournament organized in Valladolid by García Álvarez de Toledo, the first Duke of Alba, for the benefit of the Catholic Monarchs on 3–4 April 1475. I have identified this lady as Margarita de Lemos (ca. 1443–1520), the only court lady in the service of Queen Isabel named Margarita. Pedro de Cartagena (1456–1486), one of the finest poets in the queen's service – and a great-grandson of Pablo de Santa María, Bishop of Burgos, formerly Chief Rabbi of Burgos – addressed several poems to her. Indeed, it is possible that he was the unnamed *galán* and that she at that time was pregnant, concealing her condition beneath a hooped petticoat. She is the recipient of stanza 15 of Pinar's *Juego trobado*, her emblem being a chalice (a gift, I believe, from Cardinal Mendoza).¹⁵⁴ She and her sister Mencía – who became the cardinal's mistress – had come to Spain as ladies-in-waiting in the service of Juana of Portugal (1439–1474), the flirtatious wife of Enrique IV of Castile. In 1475 she had married the Captain of the Royal Guard, Sancho de Rojas de Córdoba (d. 1507), the younger brother of Diego Fernández de Córdoba, Count of Cabra.

Jousting tournaments were usually organized to mark important events such as the birth of a royal child, the investiture of a prince, a royal marriage, or the arrival of a foreign embassy, or else to celebrate feast days such as Christmas and Easter. The chosen theme of each tournament – introduced by the leading joustier – reflected the mood and concerns of a particular moment in time. After the end of the Granada Wars in 1492, these events became increasingly theatrical and ostentatious as they lost much of their relevance as military training exercises.

154 Boase, *Secrets*, 174–78; 507–08.

The dearth of information about jousting and other festivities during the reign of Isabel of Castile may reflect the low esteem in which the queen held such activities. It is evident from a letter she addressed to her confessor Fray Hernando de Talavera, signed on 4 December 1493 in Zaragoza, that she disapproved of the frivolity of tournaments.¹⁵⁵ This would explain why they are scarcely mentioned by her chroniclers and why it is so hard to find artistic representations of jousting in late 15th-century Spain. For example, after the arrival of Prince Baldwin of Burgundy at Valladolid on 17 December 1488, Pulgar merely informs us that a joust was held there on Sunday, 4 January 1489, and that it continued for 40 days; but he gives us no details. Similarly, Alonso de Palencia reveals that those who organized this event wished to outdo the tournament held by Juan II of Castile in Valladolid in 1428, celebrating the king's engagement to María de Aragón; but he fails to elaborate, saying that a more detailed description of such festivities would be incompatible with the dignity of history.¹⁵⁶ He even speaks disparagingly about the magnificent Valladolid tournament of 1475:

There were many who criticized those ill-advised festivities, who condemned the vast sums spent on such futile things when the scourge of war was threatening and when there was a shortage of funds to pay the troops. The certain news of the sudden incursion of the King of Portugal put an end to all those ridiculous jousting *invenciones*.¹⁵⁷

At this event the king wore an anvil on his helmet with the inscription: "Like the anvil, I suffer and remain silent / during the time that I am here."¹⁵⁸ The letter *Y* in *yunque* stands, of course, for the name of his wife *Ysabel*. According to Covarrubias, the anvil "is a symbol of strength and of a steadfast spirit

¹⁵⁵ Diego Clemencín, *Elogio de la Reina Católica doña Isabel* (Madrid: 1821), 374–75.

¹⁵⁶ "la dignidad de la historia se compadece mal con más minuciosa descripción de los festejos que la necesaria para el orden de los acontecimientos," (*Crónica de Enrique IV*, ed. and trans. Antonio Paz y Meliá [Madrid: 1973–75], 3:382); see Díez Garretas, "Fiestas y juegos," 26.

¹⁵⁷ "No faltaron censores de aquellas mal intencionadas fiestas que condenaron las grandes sumas en tan fútiles cosas empleadas cuando amenazaba el azote de la guerra y harían falta para la soldada de las tropas. A todas estas ridículas invenciones de las justas puso término la noticia cierta de la repentina entrada del rey de Portugal" (Palencia, *Crónica*, 3:389).

¹⁵⁸ "Como yunque sufro y callo, / por el tiempo en que me hallo" (*Crónica incompleta de los Reyes Católicos*, ed. Julio Puyol [Madrid: 1934], 169).

because it always remains as it is.”¹⁵⁹ This symbol – associated with Vulcan, the blacksmith, or with Mars, the god of war – would then have been appropriate because, in the spring of 1475, Afonso V of Portugal was preparing to invade Castile and to claim the Castilian throne by marrying his niece, Juana *La Betraneja*. It was, moreover, a time when the Catholic Monarchs were determined to show that they would take a tough line with the seditious magnates. In the opinion of Palencia, the king wished to make it known by means of this emblem that he did not deserve blame for his temporary display of tolerance because he was patiently waiting to play the part of the hammer.¹⁶⁰ But of course it may also be read as a declaration that he was willing to endure love’s tribulations in silence.

5 The Catholic Monarchs’ Personal Emblems

Let us now return to the relationship between King Fernando and Queen Isabel. The Polish traveller Nicholas von Poppelau, who witnessed the Christmas Eve celebrations at Seville in 1484, was shocked by the manner in which the king served his wife and would do nothing without obtaining her approval:

It is necessary to record here a strange paradox concerning the kingdom: the queen is king and the king is her servant [...] the nobility fears the queen more than the king, who at all times thinks only of fulfilling her orders, mandates and wishes [...] The king can do nothing without the queen’s permission; on the other hand, what she desires he must set out to accomplish.¹⁶¹

One should note that, despite his infidelities, the king used to couch his letters to her from Aragon in the language appropriate to a courtly lover: “One day you will return to your former affection. If not, I would die and you would be the guilty one.”¹⁶² The queen, in her turn, tactfully deferred to her husband and even made sure that he received the credit for decisions made by her. She

159 “es símbolo de fortaleza y ánimo infracto, porque siempre queda en su ser” (Covarrubias, *Tesoro*, 774).

160 Palencia, *Crónica*, 2:187.

161 Nicholas von Poppelau, “Relación de viaje,” in *España vista por extranjeros*, ed. and trans. José García Mercadal (Madrid: 1918–21), 1:318–19, at 319; my translation.

162 “Un día volveréis a vuestro antiguo afecto. Si no, yo morería y vos seriais culpable” (*Obras de Diego de San Pedro*, ed. Whinnom, 2:32).

accepted the royal protocol that the king take precedence over her, even in Castile, ever mindful of the words that she had spoken at her coronation: "You, as my husband, are King of Castile, and what you command there must be done."¹⁶³ She had instructed her chronicler Fernando de Pulgar to employ on every royal state occasion the magical formula "el rey y la reina"; and she insisted that, even when her husband was absent, orders should be issued in the name of both husband and wife, "for though necessity separated their persons, love held their wills together."¹⁶⁴ It is very much to the king's credit that he saw the political advantages of such an arrangement, and moreover knew how to construct *invenciones* as a form of royal propaganda and self-publicity. Some of these were displayed at jousting tournaments, while others can still be seen today on the walls and ceilings of many churches and palaces.¹⁶⁵

The emblem of a yoke (*yugo*) – a more peaceful symbol than the anvil – was devised to represent the joint sovereignty of the two monarchs as a union of wills: "The Catholic King Fernando displayed a yoke [*yugo*] because the first letter is *Y*, for Ysabel; and the Catholic Queen displayed arrows [*flechas*] as her emblem because the first letter is *F*, for Fernando."¹⁶⁶ This device of a yoke and a bundle of arrows, a symbol of strength in unity,¹⁶⁷ alluding also to Cupid's darts, was later combined with that of the Gordian knot, elucidated by the inscription "TANTO MONTA" which refers to the proverb "Tanto monta cortar como desatar."¹⁶⁸ This composite *invención*, probably crafted by the classical scholar Antonio de Nebrija, was (I believe) first displayed by the king at a tournament that took place in Salamanca between November 1486 and January

163 "Vos como mi marido sois Rey de Castilla, e se ha de facer en ella lo que mandaredes" (Pulgar, *Crónica*, 1:44).

164 Cited by Ramón Menéndez Pidal, "The Significance of the Reign of Isabella the Catholic, According to Her Contemporaries," in *Spain in the Fifteenth Century 1369–1516*, ed. Roger Highfield (London: 1972), 380–404, at 390.

165 Boase, *Secrets*, figures 41, 42, 50; Sagrario López Poza, "Empresas o divisas de Isabel de Castilla y Fernando de Aragón (los Reyes Católicos)," *Janus* 1 (2012): 1–29 [excluding illustrations].

166 "el Católico Rey don Fernando trahía un yugo, porque la primera letra es *Y*, por Ysabel; y la Reyna Católica trahía por divisa las frechas, que la primera letra es *F*, por Fernando" (Fernández de Oviedo, *Batallas*, ed. Pérez de Tudela, 1:430). According to the conventions of medieval orthography, the letters *I* and *Y* are interchangeable.

167 This emblem owes its origin to the Latin *fascēs*, plural of *fascis*, referring to a bound bundle of rods, which – as a symbol of collective power, or strength in unity – was the badge of office of magistrates in ancient Rome. It was adopted by the Italian Fascist Party, whence the origin of the word Fascist.

168 López Poza, "Empresas," 8–11: "To cut amounts to the same as to untie." This inscription is also explained in Boase, *Secrets*, 631–33, 697–700.

1487. It was later incorporated into the Aragonese royal coat of arms.¹⁶⁹ As in the case of other tournaments, the event had a double function: to prepare for war and to arrange a marriage. It was a preparation for the next phase of war against the Muslims, the siege of Málaga; and it celebrated the marriage of Teresa Enríquez de Luna, the eldest of the four daughters of Enrique Enríquez (the king's uncle) to her second cousin, Enrique Enríquez de Guzmán, the eldest son of the Count of Alba de Liste.¹⁷⁰

6 The End of an Era

The greatest time for court festivities in Spain during Isabel's reign was the short period from the fall of Granada in 1492 to the death of Prince Juan in 1497 at the age of 19, a blow to the queen from which she never recovered.¹⁷¹ When in 1496 Encina published his collected works in an individual anthology, his pretext for doing so was that as regards purity of diction and the art of versifying, poetry in Castilian had reached its peak and no further progress was possible.¹⁷² In this he plagiarized an argument that Antonio de Nebrija had used with reference to language when in 1492 he published his *Gramática de la lengua castellana*.¹⁷³ It was also in 1496 that Pinar completed his game *El juego trobado*.¹⁷⁴ The death of Prince Juan marked the end of an era. Games and festivities ceased at court until the arrival of King Fernando's second wife, Germana de Foix, in 1506.

169 Rafael Domínguez Casas, *Arte y etiqueta de los Reyes Católicos* (Madrid: 1993), 675; Gornall, *Inventiones*, 47–48.

170 Lorenzo Galíndez de Carvajal, "Adiciones genealógicas a los *Claros varones de Castilla*, de Fernán Pérez de Guzmán, Señor de Batres [1517]," in *Colección de documentos inéditos para la historia de España*, vol. 18, ed. Miguel Salvá and Pedro Sáinz de Baranda (Madrid: 1851), 461; and Boase, *Secrets*, 699.

171 Fernández de Oviedo, *Batallas*, ed. Pérez de Tudela, 2:151. On these "years of sorrow" for Isabel, see the essay by Núria Silleras-Fernández in this volume.

172 Encina, *Obras*, 1:8.

173 Juan Carlos Temprano, "El *Arte de poesía castellana* de Juan del Encina (edición y notas)," *Boletín de la Real Academia Española* 57 (1973): 321–50, at 326–27.

174 Boase, *Secrets*, 7; Óscar Perea Rodríguez, "El *Juego Trobado* de Jerónimo de Pinar: Datación del poema e identificación de los miembros de la Casa Real," *Revista de Cancioneros Impresos y Manuscritos* 6 (2017): 72–114.

Isabel of Castile and the Opening of the Atlantic

William D. Phillips, Jr.

In the last quarter of the 15th century, the game of chess underwent an important change, modifying the role of the queen in the game by changing the rules to allow it to move closer to the king and permitting it to move in several additional directions, thus greatly increasing its power.¹ Scholars of the game suggest that this new rule first spread in the Iberian and Italian peninsulas. That this fundamental alteration in how the game had been played for centuries coincided with the reign of Isabel I of Castile, a female monarch who was famous for ruling actively, suggests that she may have been an inspiration for the change that the game of chess underwent.² Isabel gained fame and infamy over the centuries for her actions in beginning the process of the alignment of Castile with the Crown of Aragón, for expelling the Jews from her kingdom, for conquering Muslim Granada, and for sponsoring Columbian and other voyages across the Atlantic to the Americas. She accomplished other things for her kingdom and even, perhaps, for the world of board games.

Isabel of Castile played a key role in the opening of the Atlantic. Some features of her actions in that sphere are less well known than others and, taken together, show that her choices and decisions were not improvisations but followed patterns different from what textbook writers often assume or emphasize.³ Taken together, they enhance our understanding of the important role she played in opening the wider Atlantic to Europeans.

1 This chapter is a revised and expanded version of my "Isabel of Castile's Portuguese Connections and the Opening of the Atlantic," in *Queen Isabel I of Castile: Power, Patronage, Persona*, ed. Barbara F. Weissberger (Woodbridge: 2008), 19–28, and is used with the kind permission of the editor.

2 Barbara F. Weissberger, *Isabel Rules: Constructing Queenship, Wielding Power* (Minneapolis: 2004), 148–61; and Marilyn Yalom, *Birth of the Chess Queen* (New York: 2004), 191–211. Both books appeared in the same year. It would seem that, independently, both authors reached the same conclusion about the central importance of Isabel of Castile in the change in the rules of chess. See, more recently, Juan Morilla Romero, "La última desaparición del alférez, la figura que procedió a la dama del ajedrez," a paper presented at the 29th annual conference of the Texas Medieval Association held at Texas State University (San Marcos, Texas, 19 October 2019).

3 For works in English, see Weissberger, *Isabel Rules*; David A. Boruchoff (ed.), *Isabel la Católica, Queen of Castile: Critical Essays* (New York: 2003); Peggy K. Liss, *Isabel the Queen: Life and*

Queen Isabel could hardly have avoided becoming involved in the increasing Castilian interest in the Atlantic. Her subjects were actively engaged in maritime ventures, as their ancestors had been for centuries. Her own predecessors had worked to support commercial activities in Europe and the Mediterranean region. Merchants and mariners of Castile in the 15th century were sailing and trading extensively in the Atlantic, from the British Isles and Flanders down to the Canaries and the African coast, and into the Mediterranean. From the south, through the ports of southwestern Andalucía went agricultural products, nuts, wines, and fruits to northwestern European and Mediterranean ports. The northern trade flourished, sending iron, iron weapons, tools, and ship fittings northward, as well as completed vessels.⁴ The tax revenues on the exportation of raw Merino wool, for example, were among the most important sources of royal income.⁵ Castilians were conquering the Canary Islands and competing with the Portuguese for the African and Atlantic island trade. During the years following the death of King Enrique IV, Isabel and her forces fought a civil war in Castile to establish her authority and fend off Portuguese incursions launched on behalf of her rival, Juana of Castile, known to her detractors as *La Beltraneja* (but to her supporters as *La Excelente Señora*). In conjunction with

Times, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: 2004); Nancy Rubin, *Isabella of Castile: The First Renaissance Queen* (New York: 1991); and John Edwards, *Ferdinand and Isabella* (Harlow: 2005). In Spanish, see Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada, *Los Reyes Católicos: La corona y la unidad de España* (Valencia: 1989); Luis Suárez Fernández, *Los Reyes Católicos* (Barcelona: 2004); Tarsicio de Azcona, *Isabel la Católica: Vida y Reinado* (Madrid: 2014); María Isabel del Val Valdivieso and Julio Valdeón Barúque, *Isabel la Católica, reina de Castilla* (Valladolid: 2004); and Manuel Fernández Álvarez, *Isabel la Católica* (Madrid: 2003).

- 4 Hilario Casado Alonso, *El triunfo de Mercurio: La presencia castellana en Europa (siglos XV y XVI)* (Burgos: 2003); Hilario Casado Alonso, "Las redes comerciales en Europa (siglos XV y XVI)," in *Comercio y hombres de negocios en Castilla y Europa en tiempos de Isabel la Católica*, ed. Hilario Casado Alonso and Antonio García-Baquero (Madrid: 2007), 279–307; Wendy R. Childs, *Anglo-Castilian Trade in the Later Middle Ages* (Manchester: 1978); Wendy R. Childs, *Trade and Shipping in the Medieval West: Portugal, Castile and England* (Porto: 2013); Betsabé Caunedo del Potro, *Mercaderes Castellanos en el Golfo de Vizcaya (1475–1492)* (Madrid: 1983); Betsabé Caunedo del Potro, *La actividad de los mercaderes ingleses en Castilla, 1475–1492* (Madrid: 1984); Betsabé Caunedo del Potro, "Comercio y hombres de negocios castellanos en tiempos de los Reyes Católicos: Técnicas y aprendizaje," in *Comercio y hombres de negocios en Castilla y Europa*, ed. Casado Alonso and García-Baquero, 251–77; and José Damián González Arce, "Los flujos comerciales del puerto de Bilbao con la Europa atlántica (1481–1501)," *Cuadernos Medievales* 19 (2015): 82–110.
- 5 Carla Rahn Phillips and William D. Phillips, Jr., *Spain's Golden Fleece: Wool Production and the Wool Trade from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century* (Baltimore: 1997). The Spanish translation appeared as *El toisón de oro español: Producción y comercio de lana en las épocas medieval y moderna*, trans. Eva García Ortiz (Valladolid: 2005).

that conflict, Isabel and her husband Fernando sanctioned a small-scale naval war that pitted her Andalusian subjects against the Portuguese. Her actions in the Atlantic expansion strengthened her kingdom and made it more competitive with Portugal in that arena. Among the most important undertakings were the special attention she paid to the Atlantic ports of Andalucía as she consolidated her realm, her assumption of royal control over the Castilian actions in the Canaries, and her sponsorship of the initial Castilian establishments in the Caribbean, both with Christopher Columbus (at first) and later without him. In each of these cases, Isabel's strategic decisions made important differences in the foundation of the Spanish empire in the Americas and in the evolution of Spanish Atlantic policy within Europe. This chapter will examine all those facets of Isabel's career as the range of European activities in the Atlantic widened.

Castile may well have embarked on its American venture if Isabel had not become queen and if Columbus had never appeared to petition for her support. Both Castile and Portugal had Atlantic interests that would probably have led one or the other of them to the ocean's western shores regardless of who sat on the throne of either country. On the other hand, Isabel's particular circumstances and attitudes and the Portuguese as well as Castilian influences on her life likely helped to guide the decisions she made, and those in turn led the early Spanish empire to unfold and develop as it did. Among those Lusitanian features were Isabel's Portuguese family ties and her initial rivalry with the Portuguese royal house.

Her Portuguese connections were significant. It is laughable to read the short accounts of Isabel and Fernando that appear in some of the textbooks written by naïve historians, at times describing Isabel as the embodiment of Castilian tradition and Fernando as a wily Catalan. Fernando may have been wily, but he was no Catalan. He had two Castilian parents and four Castilian grandparents and was thus more Castilian than Isabel. His father was King Juan II of Aragón, whose parents in turn were Fernando de Antequera, a Castilian prince who became the king of Aragón in 1412, and Leonor de Alburquerque, a Castilian countess. Fernando's mother was Juana Enríquez, daughter of Fadrique Enríquez de Mendoza, a Castilian count and the second admiral of Castile, and Marina Fernández de Córdoba, a Castilian noblewoman. Isabel's background was more diverse. Her father was King Juan II of Castile, whose parents were King Enrique III of Castile and Catalina (Catherine or Katherine) of Lancaster, daughter of the English prince John of Gaunt, who made three failed attempts to claim the Castilian throne in the late 14th century on behalf of his wife Constanza (Constance), daughter of the assassinated Castilian King Pedro I (known as Peter the Cruel). Isabel's mother, also named Isabel and

usually called Isabel of Portugal (although sometimes Isabel of Avis), was the daughter of Prince João of Portugal, constable of that kingdom among whose siblings were King Duarte of Portugal and Prince Henrique (known in English-language scholarship as Henry the Navigator). Isabel of Portugal's mother was Isabel de Barcelos, daughter of Afonso, Portuguese Count of Barcelos, who had founded the Braganza (Bragança in Portuguese) dynasty, which played a pivotal role in Portuguese high politics and eventually gained the throne in the 17th century. Isabel de Barcelos was therefore the future Catholic Queen's grandmother.⁶

Isabel's parents married in 1447, when King Juan was a widower. In 1451 his new wife, Isabel, gave birth to a daughter, whom the royal couple named Isabel (the subject of this volume), and in 1453 to a prince, Alfonso. Juan died the next year, leaving his son by his first marriage, Enrique, to take the throne as King Enrique IV and leaving his Portuguese widow with two young children: Isabel, aged three, and Alfonso, aged one. The royal widow established her household in Arévalo, on the plains of Old Castile, to raise her children. Soon her own widowed mother, Isabel of Barcelos, joined her to help with running her daughter's household. Consequently, Isabel lived in a household run by a Portuguese mother and grandmother from 1454 to 1461, during the years Isabel was three to ten years of age. The future queen's situation in those formative years undoubtedly meant that she received stronger influences from the Portuguese side of her family background than from the Castilian. The grandmother, born in 1402, in 1424 married Prince João, son of King João I of Portugal, and personally experienced the beginnings of Portugal's golden age of expansion while living with her husband in King João I's court as the Portuguese extended the frontiers of European knowledge about Africa and the Atlantic. She would have been well aware of her brother-in-law Prince Henrique's interest in and sponsorship of explorations of the African coast. She witnessed the glory and gold that flowed into Portugal during the first phase of Atlantic exploration, conquest, and expansion. News of those daring voyages and the profits derived from them were no doubt continuing topics of courtly discussions, and it is easy to assume that the young woman absorbed both the information and the excitement surrounding her. Isabel of Barcelos also observed the bitter infighting among Portugal's high nobility. Following the early death of Prince João in

6 All this material can be found in the standard reference works. Peggy K. Liss provides a useful genealogical chart following page xiv in *Isabel the Queen*. The practice of the Portuguese royal house of naming female children Isabel carried on through generations in honor of the Aragonese princess Isabel (1271–1336), who married King Dionis of Portugal in 1288 and was later canonized as Saint Isabel in 1625.

1442, she remained a widow. When King Juan II of Castile died in 1454, Isabel of Barcelos helped negotiate between Castile and Portugal when Enrique IV married Juana of Portugal. She then moved from Portugal to Arévalo to aid her widowed daughter in raising her two children. The view of many historians, following contemporary chroniclers, is that the mother exhibited signs of depression, accompanied by desires to withdraw into herself. These supposedly began with her husband's death or at the time of her daughter's birth and only became worse as she grew older. Cristina Segura Graiño challenged that view, suggesting that the withdrawal of Isabel de Portugal was more a considered ploy to avoid being caught up in the turbulent and ever-changing politics of the period. Nonetheless, Isabel of Barcelos seems to have exerted influence upon Isabel. Attending Isabel was another Portuguese woman, Clara Alvarnáz, a companion of Isabel from childhood, who lived within the queen's household until she died in 1497 or 1498. She married Gonzalo Chacón, who remained with Isabel throughout the queen's life and held increasingly important offices.⁷

Given the circumstances, the future Castilian queen's first language was likely Portuguese.⁸ One historian even speculated that her first dreams may have been in Portuguese.⁹ Isabel still would have conversed from time to time in Portuguese when she joined Enrique IV's court in 1461, as his Queen Juana brought with her an entourage of Portuguese noblewomen and servants. Later, as queen, Isabel kept a Portuguese dance troop at her court.¹⁰

Ironically, despite her Portuguese connections, Isabel had to fight the Portuguese to gain complete control of Castile. The death in 1474 of the Castilian monarch Enrique IV ushered in an era of disputed succession in Castile. His daughter, Juana (who bore the same name as her mother and whose parentage became an issue of controversy), sought the throne with

7 Alonso de Palencia, *Crónica de Enrique IV*, ed. Antonio Paz y Meliá, 4 vols (Madrid: 1973–75), 1:35. See Liss, *Isabel the Queen*, 10–24; William D. Phillips, Jr. and Carla Rahn Phillips, *The Worlds of Christopher Columbus* (Cambridge: 1992), 120–21; Edwards, *Ferdinand and Isabella*, 4; and Cristina Segura Graiño, “Influencias de Isabel de Portugal en la educación y formación política de su hija Isabel I de Castilla,” in *Isabel la Católica y su época. Actas del Congreso Internacional. Valladolid-Barcelona-Granada, 15 a 20 de noviembre de 2004*, ed. Luis Antonio Ribot García, Julio Valdeón Baroque, and Elena Maza Zorrilla (Valladolid: 2007), 1:319–334. Isabel of Barcelos sometimes appears in modern reference works as Isabel of Braganza, but when she was born in 1402 her father was the eighth Count of Barcelos. He only received the title of first Duke of Braganza in 1443, when Isabel de Barcelos was 41.

8 Luis Suárez Fernández, *Isabel I, reina* (Barcelona: 2000), 9; Val Valdivieso and Valdeón Baroque, *Isabel la Católica*, 24; and Segura Graiño, “Influencias de Isabel de Portugal,” 330.

9 Fernández Álvarez, *Isabel la Católica*, 53–54.

10 Fernández Álvarez, *Isabel la Católica*, 23–24.

backing from some important members of the nobility and some of the town governments of Castile. Opposing Juana, Fernando and Isabel won the support of other factions among the Castilian nobility and town governments, backed by the armed support of the Crown of Aragón. Juana's advisers sought a counterweight in Portugal's King Afonso V, who promised to marry Juana and entered Castile to fight for her rights of succession.

Isabel and Fernando conducted a small naval war between 1474 and 1479 against the Portuguese, pitting Andalusian corsairs against Portuguese shipping in the Atlantic and sponsoring expeditions down the African coast, where the Portuguese were hanging onto a series of toeholds. The monarchs were concerned to reassert royal control over the shipping of the region and to counter Portuguese maritime moves. They stationed armed royal vessels from May of 1475 to patrol the sea lanes around the Strait of Gibraltar and to protect the southern coastal approaches. They provided letters of marque and issued licenses for trading and raiding voyages to Africa. Most importantly (from their viewpoint), they made sure dues to the crown were properly paid; from December of 1475 they placed royal officials on all voyages. Isabel licensed some of the voyages herself and authorized her faithful official Gonzalo Chacón to license others.¹¹

The decisive battles in the war with Portugal were fought on land, however, and in the end Isabel and Fernando prevailed. The settlement of the war and the related concerns of Hispano-Portuguese rivalry involved a series of intricate negotiations. Once peace seemed desirable, Isabel met with Beatriz, the Portuguese Duchess of Braganza (who happened to be her aunt) in an effort to open negotiations. The Braganza family had remained neutral in the war of succession, largely out of hostility to the Portuguese King Afonso V and his heir Prince João, but they had retained close ties with Isabel. Nonetheless, King Afonso was willing to accept Beatriz as his go-between in the early stages of negotiation. The conversations between Isabel of Castile and Beatriz of Braganza ultimately led to a series of agreements worked out by representatives of Castile and Portugal at the Portuguese town of Alcáçovas late in 1479

11 Liss, *Isabel*, 157–59. Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada, “Entre dos mares: Armadas de los Reyes Católicos en el Mediterráneo y en el Atlántico (1475–1515),” in *Estudios en homenaje al profesor César González Mínguez*, ed. Iñaki Bazán Díaz (Bilbao: 2015), 139–158; and Paulina Rufo Isern, “La expansión peninsular por la costa africana: El enfrentamiento entre Portugal y Castilla (1475–1480),” *La Rábida* 71 (1990): 59–75. Still useful is the work of mid-20th-century historians. See Florentino Pérez-Embid, *Los descubrimientos en el Atlántico y la rivalidad castellano-portuguesa hasta el Tratado de Tordesillas* (Sevilla: 1948); and Antonio Rumeu de Armas, *España en el África atlántica*, 2 vols (Madrid: 1956–57).

and ratified in the Castilian town of Trujillo. Afonso v and Juana renounced all claims to the Castilian throne and discarded their marriage plans. Juana entered the convent of Santa Clara in Coimbra but afterwards often resided in Lisbon. A new marriage alliance was planned between the eldest daughter of Fernando and Isabel, also named Isabel, and the grandson of Afonso v, also named Afonso.¹²

The treaties worked out at Alcáçovas and ratified by Castile in Trujillo restored peace between Portugal and Castile. The agreements also contained a definitive settlement of the two countries' African and Atlantic rivalries. By their terms, Castile recognized Portugal's monopoly over maritime traffic along the western shore of Africa south of the Canaries. Portugal recognized Castile's possession of the Canaries, while Castile recognized Portugal's possession of all the other Atlantic islands already discovered – including some of the Azores, Madeira and Porto Santo – plus those in the Gulf of Guinea. The Portuguese also received title to any new lands that might be encountered “from the Canary Islands down toward Guinea,”¹³ that is, south of the Canaries along the African coast. Castilian mariners found themselves legally barred from the lucrative African trade and the potentially more lucrative sea route to Asia. It was, all told, a high price for Isabel and her kingdom to pay, but it did guarantee her throne.

Isabel's actions as Queen of Castile demonstrate that she continued to support her subjects' long-established activities in the Atlantic. Early in her reign, while the war with Portugal was still being fought and while many Castilian towns and nobles had not yet been pacified, she and Fernando secured the northern trade routes. The city of Burgos, vital in the export trade of wool, came under their control in September of 1475. In the summer of the next year Fernando stationed naval forces near the crucial port of Bilbao. In July

12 Liss, *Isabel*, 197–200.

13 The Spanish wording of the phrase is “de las yslas de Canaria para yuso contra Guinea.” See John H. Parry and Robert G. Keith (eds.), *The New Iberian World: A Documentary History of the Discovery and Settlement of Latin America to the Early 17th Century*, 5 vols, vol. 1: *The Conquerors and the Conquered* (New York: 1984), 266–71. This phrasing later became crucial in a dispute over whether Columbus's first discoveries fell in the area reserved for Portugal or Castile. For a study of the dispute, see Luis Suárez Fernández, *Política internacional de Isabel la Católica: estudio y documentos*, 5 vols (Valladolid: 1965–1969), 1:195–223. The Spanish text of the agreement, signed in Alcáçovas on 4 September 1479, and confirmed by Isabel on 27 September 1479 in Trujillo, is contained in *Documentos referentes a las relaciones con Portugal durante el reinado de los Reyes Católicos*, ed. Antonio de la Torre and Luis Suárez Fernández, 3 vols (Valladolid: 1958–63), 1:277. For the Atlantic rivalry, see Pérez Embid, *Los descubrimientos*.

1476 Fernando was recognized as monarch over Vizcaya in a ceremony at Guernica.¹⁴ Thus key portions of the northern trade routes were held in royal hands. Isabel entered Sevilla in July 1477 as part of a plan to bring southwestern Andalucía and its vital Atlantic ports under royal control. Since the time of the reconquest of the region in the 13th century, royal control had been asserted but never fully completed. Nobles who participated in the campaigns had been rewarded with key possessions, nominally as proxies for the crown (but in reality they operated as independent lords). Additional royal grants to supporters in the civil wars of the 14th and 15th centuries further eroded royal prerogatives. Nobles also usurped royal taxes and customs dues.¹⁵

Fernando and Isabel began their reign without control of any southern port, with the notable exception of the inland city of Sevilla on the Guadalquivir River. All of Andalusia's Atlantic ports were in the hands of nobles. Rodrigo Ponce de León (Marqués of Cádiz) controlled Cádiz and Rota. The Count (later Duke in 1479) of Medinaceli (Luis de la Cerda y de la Vega) held the Puerto de Santa María. Sanlúcar de Barrameda, Chipiona, and Huelva belonged to the Duke of Medina Sidonia, Enrique de Guzmán, one of the richest noblemen in Spain with important interests in Atlantic shipping. Through inheritance he was also the Count of Niebla, a region that included Palos and La Rábida. The ships he owned competed with the Portuguese in African ventures, and he held interests in the Canaries and the Mar Pequeña (Little Sea), the nickname for that part of the Atlantic between the Canaries and the African coast. Though overshadowed by the great commerce of Andalusian ports from Sevilla to Cádiz, the towns of Huelva, Moguer (under the Puertocarrero family), and Palos enjoyed a long seafaring tradition and formed an economic unit. Their citizens specialized in smaller vessels designed for trading with Portugal and the Canaries. The county of Niebla could therefore provide good ships, officers, and crew members who were experienced in deep ocean sailing. Experienced masters, pilots, and sailors lived in all three ports. Many of them had sailed down the African coast in the days before the Treaties of Alcáçovas-Trujillo in 1479 had prohibited Spaniards from sailing south of Cape Bojador. Some of them continued to do so thereafter, in violation of the treaty agreements. Their lives were closely linked to the great ocean, and many families sustained

14 Liss, *Isabel*, 143.

15 Paulina Rufo Isern, "Poder real y municipios en Andalucía (1475–1480)," *Anuario de estudios medievales* 19 (1989): 587–600. For what follows in this article, see Santiago Olmedo Bernal, *El dominio del Atlántico en la baja Edad Media: Los títulos jurídicos de la expansión peninsular hasta el Tratado de Tordesillas* (Valladolid: 1995).

themselves in the coastal tuna fisheries (*almadrabas*) that had been in operation for centuries.¹⁶

Isabel, without Fernando, entered Sevilla in a carefully staged parade with the sword of justice prominently displayed and soon began to hold sessions in which she judged participants in the city's recent upheavals. The two most prominent nobles and Isabel's primary concerns were the Marqués of Cádiz and the Duke of Medina Sidonia. Both men operated what amounted to private navies that engaged in ordinary trade, coastal and deep seas fishing, and less ordinary activities: trading and raiding on Portuguese possessions and along the African coasts, as well as occasional clandestine smuggling. Through firmness and threats, combined with skilled cajoling, she and Fernando – who later arrived in Sevilla – convinced them to relinquish important holdings. The *marqués* controlled the city of Cádiz, coastal towns near Cádiz, and the city and *alcázar* of Jerez de la Frontera. He had to give up the coastal towns and his positions in Jerez. The duke controlled a number of other positions and had to give up the Alcázar of Sevilla, the fortress of Triana across the Guadalquivir River, the port of Jerez de la Frontera, and other non-coastal towns and cities. Beginning in 1477 and continuing for years, Isabel regained crown control over *almojarifazgos* (customs duties) and other royal taxes usurped by the *marqués* and the duke along with their fellow nobles in the region.¹⁷

Moreover, throughout her reign she made efforts to gain control over the Atlantic ports of Andalusia, especially those in the region of the lower Guadalquivir river valley, the Bay of Cádiz, and as far west as Palos. While the war with Portugal was going on, Castilian mariners remained active in the Atlantic, despite losing much of the developing African trade and a chance to pioneer the sea route around Africa to Asia. Isabel made efforts to increase royal influence over her subjects' activities in the Atlantic. Isabel's interests in the ports of Andalusia are important as a component of Isabel's concerted

16 Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada, *Los Guzmán: La casa ducal de Medina Sidonia en Sevilla y su reino, 1282–1521* (Madrid: 2015); and Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada, *Andalucía en torno a 1492: Estructura, valores, sucesos* (Madrid: 1992).

17 Luis Suárez Fernández, "Andalucía en la época de los Reyes Católicos," in *Historia Medieval: Actas del 11 Congreso de Historia de Andalucía* (Sevilla: 1994), 1:317–30; Paulina Rufo Isern, "Los Reyes Católicos y la pacificación de Andalucía (1475–1480)," *Historia. Instituciones. Documentos* 15 (1988): 217–50; José Damián González Arce, "Pugnas entre monarquía y aristocracia por el control de los almojarifazgos costeros y otros derechos aduaneros de la Andalucía atlántica en el reinado de los Reyes Católicos," *Anuario de estudios medievales* 47.1 (2017): 73–106; and Juan Luis Carriazo Rubio, "Fernando el Católico en Andalucía: Entre los nobles y Granada," *Andalucía en la Historia* 52 (2016): 40–45.

efforts to strengthen the Atlantic vocation of Castile that would be useful for European and Canarian trade.

After dealing with the duke and the *marqués*, Isabel continued to reestablish and extend royal jurisdiction over the ports. In 1483 Isabel and Fernando built a totally new port, Puerto Real, on the part of the Bay of Cádiz controlled by Jerez de la Frontera (a royal city). In June of 1492, Queen Isabel bought the port and half the town of Palos de la Frontera. The town of Palos had first been settled in the 1380s; by the time of Isabel, it boasted some 3,000 inhabitants. It was owned by a three-part consortium of nobles: Pedro de Silva, Count of Cifuentes, with his brothers and sisters owned half the town; Pedro de Zúñiga, Count of Miranda, and Enrique de Guzmán, Duke of Medina Sidonia, owned the rest. In June of 1492, Queen Isabel bought the Silvas' half of Palos, including the port. This purchase, which entailed an expenditure of 16 million *maravedíes* at a time when the treasury was already strained, was part of a conscious maritime strategy. In the aftermath of the early voyages of discovery in the Atlantic, the ports of western Andalusia were well placed to take advantage of new trading opportunities.¹⁸ East of the Strait of Gibraltar, with the conquest of Granada in 1492, the monarchs acquired Almería, Málaga, and the other Mediterranean ports formerly controlled by the Muslim kingdom. In January of 1493 they took over Cádiz following the death of Rodrigo Ponce de León, compensating his family with the town of Casares, near Ronda, in addition to a payment of 10 million *maravedíes*.¹⁹ Taken together, her actions to extend her authority over the Andalusian ports demonstrate her desire to secure these strongholds of maritime commerce and naval defense and place them directly under royal control.²⁰

Isabel was equally interested in her subjects' actions in the Canary Islands. Europeans first entered the uncharted portions of the Atlantic in the 13th and

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- 18 Juan José Iglesias Rodríguez, "La fundación de Puerto Real en el contexto de la política atlántica de los Reyes Católicos (1483–1496)," in *Poder, sociedad, religión y tolerancia en el mundo hispánico, de Fernando el Católico al siglo XVIII*, ed. Eliseo Serrano Martín and Jesús Gascón Pérez (Zaragoza: 2018), 2:377–393; Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada, "Palos en vísperas del descubrimiento," *Revista de Indias* 38 (1978): 471–506; Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada, "Sanlúcar de Barrameda, antepuerto de Sevilla, a finales del siglo xv," in *Mundos medievales: Espacios, sociedades y poder. Homenaje al profesor José Ángel García de Cortázar y Ruiz de Aguirre*, ed. Beatriz Arízaga Bolumburu (Santander: 2012), 2:1491–1508.
 - 19 Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada, *Andalucía en el siglo xv: Estudios de historia política* (Madrid: 1973), 2–10, 12–17, 19–25; and Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada, "Cádiz, de señorío a realengo," *Estudios de historia y de arqueología medievales* 10 (1994): 101–20.
 - 20 Ladero Quesada, *Andalucía en el siglo xv*. For the importance of the ports and their people for the Atlantic ventures, see the studies collected in David González Cruz (ed.), *Descubridores de América: Colón, los marinos y los puertos* (Madrid: 2012).

14th centuries, landing in the Canaries and the Madeiras. French, Aragonese, Portuguese, and Castilian ship captains initially visited the islands for easily obtainable items such as wood and the red dye “dragon’s blood,” the resin of the dragon tree.²¹ These late-medieval European visitors found the islands inhabited by people related to the Berbers of northwest Africa and living at a Neolithic level of culture. Primarily herders, only on Grand Canary had the Canarians developed an agricultural economy. Throughout the islands, they were organized politically into bands. When Castilian-sponsored expeditions began to conquer parts of the islands from the early 15th century, they made treaties with some of the bands and conquered others. By the end of the 15th century, Europeans had developed agriculture on the islands, with sugar cane as the principal crop.²²

When Isabel became queen, four of the Canary Islands (Lanzarote, Fuerteventura, Gomera, and Hierro) had been conquered by Castilian-authorized expeditions, but three were yet to be conquered (Tenerife, La Palma, and Gran Canaria). Isabel reasserted prior Castilian royal claims to the islands, based ultimately on the assertion that they had been part of the Visigothic inheritance, though there is no evidence that the Visigoths had been concerned with those islands. On a practical level, she reached an agreement by which Castilian noble families recognized her sovereignty over the four islands they controlled. In addition, she bought the rights they claimed over the three unconquered islands. Thus, Castilian royal control over the Canaries attained solid juridical standing.²³

21 Antonio Manuel Macías Hernández, “Los móviles económicos del redescubrimiento y conquista de Canarias 1340–1496,” *Estudios Canarios: Anuario del Instituto de Estudios Canarios* 472 (2002): 269–90; and Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada, *Los primeros europeos en Canarias (Siglos XIV y XV)* (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria: 1979). For the sugar background of the Atlantic islands, see Ana del Carmen Viña Brito, “El cultivo de la caña de azúcar en Canarias en los inicios de la colonización,” *Estudios Canarios: Anuario del Instituto de Estudios Canarios* 59 (2015): 239–64; Alberto Vieira, “The Sugar Economy of Madeira and the Canaries, 150–1650,” in *Tropical Babels: Sugar and the Making of the Atlantic World, 1450–1680*, ed. Stuart B. Schwartz (Chapel Hill: 2004), 42–84; and Manuel Lobo Cabrera, “Azúcar y trabajo en Canarias,” in *Agua, trabajo y azúcar: Actas del VI Seminario Internacional sobre la Caña de Azúcar* (Motril, 19–23 de septiembre de 1994), ed. Antonio Malpica Cuello (Granada: 1996), 223–38.

22 Luis Rojas Donat, “La reina Isabel entre las Canarias y las Indias,” in *Arte y cultura en la época de Isabel la Católica*, ed. Julio Valdeón Barúque (Valladolid: 2003), 405–25; and Ana del Carmen Viña Brito and Margarita Rodríguez González, “Canarias en Europa: Del redescubrimiento al siglo XVI,” in *Isabel la Católica: La magnificencia de un reinado* (Quinto centenario de Isabel la Católica, 1504–2004) (Valladolid: 2004), 201–14.

23 Manuel Lobo Cabrera, “Isabel la Católica: Canarias y la expansión africana,” in *XVI Coloquio de Historia Canario-Americana* (2004), ed. Francisco Morales Padrón (Las Palmas

It seems likely that Isabel may have been guided in these ventures by Portuguese experience and precedent. Until the 1480s, the Portuguese crown had allowed the captains who secured control of Atlantic islands to exercise wide latitude in governing and exploiting them. One example was Christopher Columbus's father-in-law, Bartolomeu Perestrelo, who was one of the leaders of the Portuguese expedition that claimed Madeira and the nearby island of Porto Santo. His reward was the hereditary captaincy of Porto Santo. Late in the 15th century, the Portuguese monarchs were asserting their control and displacing the donatary captains in the Azores and in the islands of Madeira and Porto Santo.²⁴

The Canaries were inhabited, but the Portuguese islands were not. Isabel had to confront the dilemma of defining what it meant to make Canarians subjects of the Castilian crown and how such subjects might be treated. One crucial part of this problem regarded slavery. Slavery has been a constant part of human history. In medieval Europe and in the Islamic world, it continued to be fed both by the enslavement of prisoners of war and by the slave trade from Central and Eastern Europe and sub-Saharan Africa. The Portuguese began exploring and trading with Atlantic Africa in the 15th century, bringing sub-Saharan African slaves to Europe. That influx caused a resurgence of slavery in Portugal and Spain, as did Spain's final conquest of the Kingdom of Granada. The numbers of slaves grew in Andalusian cities, especially Sevilla, and in Valencia as well as other eastern coastal cities.²⁵

de Gran Canaria: 2006), 1937–44; Carlos Romero, "La conquista de Canarias," *Clio: Revista de historia* 121 (2011): 38–47; and Eduardo Aznar Vallejo, *La integración de las Islas Canarias en la Corona de Castilla (1478–1526): Aspectos administrativos, sociales, y económicos* (Seville: 1983).

24 Francisco Bethencourt and Diogo Ramada Curto (eds.), *Portuguese Oceanic Expansion, 1400–1800* (Cambridge: 2007); M.D.D. Newitt, *A History of Portuguese Overseas Expansion, 1400–1668* (London: 2005); and George D. Winus (ed.), *Portugal the Pathfinder: Journeys from the Medieval toward the Modern World, 1300-ca. 1600* (Madison: 1995). See also the collected essays in P.E. Russell, *Portugal, Spain, and the African Atlantic, 1343–1490: Chivalry and Crusade from John of Gaunt to Henry the Navigator* (Aldershot: 1995).

25 Among the many works on the topic, see William D. Phillips, Jr., *Slavery in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia* (Philadelphia: 2014); Alfonso Franco Silva, *La esclavitud en Andalucía, 1450–1550* (Granada: 1992); Alfonso Franco Silva, *La esclavitud en Sevilla y su tierra a fines de la Edad Media* (Sevilla: 1979); and Aurelia Martín Casares, *La esclavitud en la Granada del siglo XVI: Género, raza, y religión* (Granada: 2000). The pioneer of studies on slavery in the Middle Ages was Charles Verlinden. His classic works are *L'esclavage dans l'Europe médiévale*, vol. 1: *Péninsule ibérique – France* (Bruges: 1955) and vol. 2: *Italie – Colonies italiennes du Levant – Levant latin – Empire Byzantin* (Ghent: 1977).

With this background, it is not surprising that European conquerors in the Canaries enslaved some members of the conquered population. Members of the treaty bands, by long tradition, could not be legally enslaved. Members of bands that had not agreed to the treaties could and often were enslaved, as slaves *de buena guerra* (of good war). To complicate the picture, if members of the treaty bands later revolted, they could be and often were enslaved, as slaves *de segunda guerra* (of [a] second war). Conquerors and slave dealers were often less than scrupulous in determining whom they captured and shipped back to Andalusia to be sold as slaves. Isabel, alerted by church authorities, intervened and forced the investigation of the true status of Canarian slaves, allowing many of those who had been captured and sold illegally to be freed and return home. This intervention was a precedent for Isabel's actions in the Americas later on, when she insisted on the rights of native people as subjects of the Castilian crown.²⁶

In the Columbian venture and the beginnings of the American empire, Portuguese connections were again apparent. We must turn for a moment to internal Portuguese politics. In 1483 Fernando, the second Duke of Bragança, Isabel's uncle, attempted to assassinate the new King João II and take over his throne. The plot failed and Bragança was quickly executed. In August of 1484, Diogo, the fourth Duke of Viseu, botched another assassination attempt against the king and ended up being stabbed to death himself, probably by the king's own hand. Both conspirators had sought Castilian support. Although Fernando and Isabel had not openly encouraged the treason of Bragança and Viseu, they did give refuge to many Portuguese exiles who crossed into Spain in 1483 and 1484 in the aftermath of both failed conspiracies. The most prominent of them was Álvaro de Portugal, brother of the slain Duke of Bragança and another uncle of Queen Isabel. He took up residence with the royal court in 1485; and before he returned to Portugal following the death of João II in 1495, he was appointed to high offices in Castile, including that of president of the Royal Council. With close access to his niece the queen, Álvaro de Portugal could have reinforced what Isabel had learned from her mother and grandmother concerning Portuguese activities in the Atlantic with news of their recent explorations. As for Columbus himself, his Portuguese wife Felipa Perestrello e Moniz pertained to the minor nobility and was related to the Braganças, this making her a relative of Isabel herself. Felipa's father had served in the household of Isabel's Portuguese grandfather (it is possible that

26 Manuel Lobo Cabrera, "La esclavitud del indígena canario," *El Museo Canario* 552 (2000): 125–38.

Isabel's grandmother may have told her about him). Columbus moved from Portugal to Spain in the mid-1480s to seek support after the Portuguese King João II declined to finance his proposed westward voyage into the Ocean Sea. Columbus's decision to leave Portugal when he did might also have been related to the political situation. The Moniz family, connected to the Bragança faction in Portuguese politics, lost its influence at court after the attempted assassinations.²⁷

Columbus went to Spain shortly afterward. He seems to have made an easy transition to Andalucía. Although we have no evidence that he had visited Spain before ca. 1485, he possessed certain advantages and a ready-made set of contexts into which he could easily fit. Members of his wife's family were already there, among many prominent Portuguese exiles, some if not most of whom Columbus would have known from Lisbon. In addition to his in-laws, Columbus also retained connections in Andalucía among the significant and influential communities of Italian merchants resident there. Many Genoese merchants and bankers, and a smaller number of Florentines and other Italians, resided in Sevilla. They formed part of an Italian community well integrated into Spanish society: many of Sevilla's Italian families had been present in the city since its reconquest from the Muslims in the mid-13th century.²⁸ As we might expect from a Genoese merchant mariner accustomed to the exciting atmosphere of Lisbon, Columbus seems to have headed for Sevilla shortly after arriving in Andalucía. As the major port on the Guadalquivir River, Sevilla was the largest city in southern Spain. Triana across the river was home to many of the sailors and shipmasters who provided crews and officers for Spain's

27 For the Portuguese in Castile and Columbus's likely connections with them, see Phillips and Phillips, *The Worlds of Christopher Columbus*; and Rebecca Catz, *Christopher Columbus and the Portuguese, 1476–1498* (Westport, CT: 1993). For additional material on Columbus, see William D. Phillips, Jr., "Christopher Columbus," *Oxford Bibliographies Online* (Oxford: 2010), <http://oxfordbibliographiesonline.com/~>. For the overtures of the Braganza faction to Fernando and Isabel and for the Braganza and Viseu exiles in Castile, see Suárez Fernández, *Política internacional de Isabel la Católica*, 2:61–62, 66, 68. Juan Manzano Manzano, in *Cristóbal Colón: Siete años decisivos de su vida, 1485–1492*, 2nd ed. (Madrid: 1989) clarifies much about those crucial seven years, but his assertions must always be checked against other sources.

28 Raúl González Arévalo, "Florentinos entre Cádiz y Sevilla en los siglos XIV y XV," in *De mar a mar: Los puertos castellanos en la Baja Edad Media*, ed. Eduardo Aznar Vallejo and Roberto J. González Zalacaín (La Laguna: 2015), 273–307; Consuelo Varela, *Colón y los florentinos* (Madrid: 1988), pp. 46–47; Enrique Otte, Antonio-Miguel Bernal, and Antonio Collantes de Terán, *Sevilla y sus mercaderes a fines de la Edad Media* (Sevilla: 1996); and Blanca Morell Peguero, *Mercaderes y artesanos en la Sevilla del Descubrimiento* (Sevilla: 1986).

Mediterranean and Atlantic expeditions. Columbus followed the Castilian court from place to place during his early years in Spain, hoping to gain a royal audience. Columbus traveled to Alcalá de Henares in late October 1485, and the monarchs probably granted him his first audience on 20 January 1486.²⁹

Fernando and Isabel began authorizing modest grants for Columbus's living expenses and for travel to and from the court. They held out a slight possibility of helping him later, perhaps after the war with Granada ended. By stringing him along in this way, they prevented him from taking his ideas elsewhere until they had the time and money to deal with them. Columbus applied for support several more times while the war continued. Not only did the monarchs treat him courteously, but they gave him additional grants. Neither totally rejected nor fully supported, Columbus remained in a kind of limbo, his frustration very likely growing as time passed.

Sometime in the late 1480s, when Columbus seems to have despaired of ever gaining royal support, he approached the Dukes of Medina Sidonia and Medinaceli, two of Andalucía's most prominent nobles. Both men, as we saw earlier, displayed strong interests in shipping and maritime trade and could easily have mounted an expedition on the small scale that Columbus had in mind. For reasons that remain unclear, Medina Sidonia chose not to back Columbus's plans. The Duke of Medinaceli was another potential supporter of Columbus, however. As one of his titles, Medinaceli was also the lord of Puerto de Santa María, an important town on the north side of the Bay of Cádiz; the duke's mother, Leonor de Mendoza, was the niece of the Cardinal of Spain, Pedro González de Mendoza, a prominent royal adviser. Medinaceli was quite willing to help with Columbus's plans. He provided him with room and board in the Puerto de Santa María for a considerable time. Medinaceli and Columbus worked out an agreement by which the duke would provide three to four thousand ducats to pay for three ships, their crews, provisions for a year, and trade goods. One detail remained. Medinaceli had to make sure that the king and queen truly were not interested in sponsoring Columbus. In recent

29 Manzano, *Siete años decisivos*, 2nd ed., 66–68. Columbus's trip to Alcalá is documented in Francisco Henríquez de Jorquera, *Crónica de la conquista de Granada*, ed. Antonio Marín Ocete (Granada: 1934), 1:377. Columbus mentioned the date of his first royal audience in the diary of his first voyage. The entry for 14 January 1493 addressed the monarchs, remembering the time when "I came to serve you, which now is seven years ago on January 20." See *The Diario of Christopher Columbus's First Voyage to America, 1492–1493, Abstracted by Fray Bartolomé de las Casas*, trans. and ed. Oliver Dunn and James E. Kelley, Jr. (Norman: 1989), entry for 14 January 1493. Helen Nader has shown that the actual date of the first meeting could have been different. See Helen Nader, "Columbus in Spain," *Christopher Columbus Encyclopedia* (New York: 1992), 188–89.

years, the monarchs had become much more intrigued by oceanic voyages and more concerned to keep such ventures under royal control. To have backed a voyage without their approval was no longer a possibility, even for a nobleman as rich and powerful as Medinaceli. When Medinaceli wrote to the queen and king for a royal license, she replied graciously but did not issue the license.

The project Columbus eventually presented to Isabel and Fernando offered them a way, potentially, to reach the rich lands and commerce of Asia but at the same time avoid violating the Portuguese monopoly on trade and travel along the coast of Atlantic Africa. It also fit well with what both the Spanish monarchs knew of the success of the Portuguese in Africa, where the monarchs entered profit-sharing agreements with individual captains. Columbus's voyage would receive a royal license, recognize royal authority, and be financed in part by investments from Italian merchants living in Iberia, much as Portuguese African voyages were financed. Columbus was to claim islands and mainland he might find, but the principal aim was to establish commercial relations with Asia.³⁰

With time, it became clear that the islands and mainland that Columbus encountered were not outposts of a huge trading network of Asian proportions. It became equally clear that he made mistakes and abused his position as a colonial administrator, arousing near rebellion among the settlers.³¹ Isabel and Fernando relieved Columbus of his offices and began to establish a new system of colonization similar to what they had been operating in the Canaries. This included colonists able to establish municipalities and royal officials put in place to maintain control over revenues. The Portuguese certainly sent out royal officials to their African enclaves, most notably at this period the station at Mina; but African conditions, political and environmental, precluded large- or even small-scale European settlement there.

Isabel was also greatly annoyed by Columbus's enslavement of people in the Caribbean islands. After long deliberations with her advisers, Isabel established the royal position on how the indigenous Americans were to be treated. She followed Canarian precedents in providing that the peoples of the Americas were subjects of the Castilian crown and were not to be enslaved in most circumstances. This was a step in the expansion of the categories of

30 For the broader context of Columbus, see Phillips and Phillips, *The Worlds of Christopher Columbus*.

31 Consuelo Varela and Isabel Aguirre, *La caída de Cristóbal Colón: El juicio de Bobadilla* (Madrid: 2006).

people not to be enslaved which ultimately led to our modern rejection of any form of slavery.³²

By the end of Isabel's life in 1504, she had made good use of what she had learned from the Portuguese side of her personal inheritance, establishing a strong foundation for Spain's Atlantic empire. By no means did all of her actions imitate Portuguese patterns. Her policies toward her indigenous subjects, for example, came from her close collaboration with Spanish legal and spiritual advisers. Nonetheless, we can see echoes of what she learned from her Portuguese relatives as she made crucial decisions in the development of her Atlantic policies. From both Portuguese and Spanish precedents, Isabel, as a reigning and assertive queen, played a major role in opening the Atlantic. In this as in other aspects of her queenship, she may well have provided a model for the enhanced role of the queen in the game of chess.

32 Helen Nader, "Desperate Men, Questionable Acts: The Moral Dilemma of Italian Merchants in the Spanish Slave Trade," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 33.2 (2002): 401–22. The scholarly literature on Latin American slavery is massive. A starting place is Herbert S. Klein and Ben Vinson III, *African Slavery in Latin America and the Caribbean*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: 2007).

Hostile Histories: Isabel and Fernando in Jewish and Muslim Narratives

Michelle M. Hamilton

The expulsion of the Jews and the conquest of Granada in the 15th century are hailed by Iberian chroniclers like Andrés Bernáldez and Fernando del Pulgar as among the defining achievements of the Catholic Monarchs Isabel and Fernando.¹ Theresa Earenfight notes that modern scholars of the Catholic Monarchs “tend to line up by discipline” with scholars of feminist and gender theories tending to focus on queenship, and those “trained in law and political theory” studying kingship.² Acknowledging that women in premodern times ruled at “the pleasure of a man,” Earenfight nevertheless suggests analyzing how Isabel and Fernando “constructed and practiced monarchy,” privileging their relational dynamic.³

Earenfight notes that the two came from kingdoms with different models of monarchy. Isabel of Castile was the product of a pragmatic monarchy facing instability, caught between clerical and noble interests, while Fernando of Aragón came out of a “contractual form of monarchy” in a system that had historically been led by a series of powerful queens consort who acted as surrogate lieutenants for their often absent spouses.⁴ Isabel’s role and power as queen were determined in part by the couple’s prenuptial agreements – the Cervera treaties negotiated over some five years – according to which Fernando was made “king consort” and allowed certain control over the military. But he “could act in Castile only with Isabel’s permission,” with Isabel retaining the “right of female succession” in Castile.⁵

1 Andrés Bernáldez, *Historia de los Reyes Católicos, Don Fernando y Doña Isabel*, vol. 1 (Seville: 1870), ch. 8, 26–27; Fernando del Pulgar, *Crónica de los Señores Reyes Católicos Don Fernando y Doña Isabel de Castilla y de Aragón*, vol. 3 (Valencia: 1780), 480.

2 Theresa Earenfight, “Two Bodies, One Spirit: Isabel and Fernando’s Construction of Monarchical Partnership,” in *Queen Isabel I of Castile: Power, Patronage, Persona*, ed. Barbara F. Weissberger (Woodbridge, Suffolk: 2008), 3–18, at 4–5.

3 Earenfight, “Two Bodies, One Spirit,” 6–7.

4 Earenfight, “Two Bodies, One Spirit,” 9.

5 Earenfight, “Two Bodies, One Spirit,” 11–12. Fernando was eventually granted the ‘right of proxy’ in Castile when the two were apart.

Giving credit to both monarchs did present some challenges for chroniclers and other intellectuals who inherited models that often focused exclusively on the king and his actions. Barbara Weissberger has pointed out that in other forms of literature, such as the typical manual of behavior, authors such as Fray Martín in *El jardín de nobles doncellas* deployed biblical models (Eva/Ave) to shape the proper role of the queen as noble but subservient to the (male) king.⁶ In addition, Isabel held an activist position vis-à-vis her chroniclers and other authors whose work she and Fernando commissioned. As Weissberger points out, “From the moment of her accession, she set out to craft a master narrative of her reign,” replacing the court historians with ones she hand-picked and then paying them generously.⁷

Both Cristina Guardiola-Griffiths and Weissberger examine how Isabel and her propagandizers sought to create an image of her as a legitimate and independent sovereign, and how that image was complicated by gender norms and roles. Both scholars examine the cultural production written in Castilian through which this propaganda was deployed (and how it succeeded). Given the importance of Isabel still today in Castilian and Spanish culture more broadly, it is obvious that the image created by Castilian chroniclers has continued to succeed and provide Isabel with a foundational place in Spanish history and culture. Guardiola-Griffiths points out that in “the many works written for her and dedicated to her [...] Isabel is seen [...] as a just and wise monarch, as a redeemer of her people, and as a divine sovereign.”⁸

But however much Isabel and her official chroniclers may have sought to establish her independence, sovereignty, and power in Castile – and provide her with a legacy as a national Catholic heroine – early modern Arabic and Hebrew-speaking chroniclers portray her very differently. In one important Nasrid source she is eclipsed entirely, while in one of the earliest histories of the Sephardic diaspora, far from being a just and wise redeemer of her people, she is portrayed as an agent of diabolical evil, in league with the Devil.

For example, we find Fernando mentioned, but no mention of Isabel, in a letter composed by the secretary of the last Nasrid king of Granada, Boabdil. Muḥammad al-‘Arabī al-‘Uqaylī penned a letter to the sultan of Fes, Muḥammad al-Sheikh al-Waṭṭāṣī, a copy of which is included at the end of Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Maqqarī’s (ca. 1578–1632) *Nafḥ al-ṭīb min ġusn al-Andalus al-ratīb*

6 Barbara Weissberger, *Isabel Rules: Constructing Queenship, Wielding Power* (Minneapolis: 2004), 32–33.

7 Weissberger, *Isabel Rules*, 71.

8 Cristina Guardiola-Griffiths, *Legitimizing the Queen: Propaganda and Ideology in the Reign of Isabel I of Castile* (Lewisberg: 2011), 11.

(History of the Muhammedan dynasties).⁹ Al-Maqqarī was a 17th-century Tunisian intellectual who moved to Morocco and used many primary sources brought by the *moriscos* expelled from Spain to North Africa to compose an account of the history and literature of the Muslims of Spain.¹⁰ One of those sources was al-ʿUqaylī's letter, in which he adopts the poetic voice of Boabdil comparing the fall of Granada to that of the cities ʿĀd and Thamūd mentioned in the Quran (Surah 7:65; 7:73–78), as well as to the historical fall of Abbasid Baghdad to the Mongols in 1258.¹¹ In this petition to the Waṭṭāsīd king to accept Boabdil as a refugee, al-ʿUqaylī relates that the “*walī* of Castile” offered the Granadan ruler protection and lands. This lord or *walī* would have been Fernando, although al-ʿUqaylī does not mention his name. Boabdil (as related by al-ʿUqaylī and copied in al-Maqqarī's history) rejected Fernando's offer, preferring to live among Muslims.¹²

In addition to al-ʿUqaylī's letter, Al-Maqqarī also includes sections from an anonymous chronicle, the *Nubḍat al-ʿaṣr*, written by a witness to the War of Granada.¹³ According to Fernando Nicolás Velázquez Basanta, it dates to 1499 and was composed by a witness who was present during the conflict.¹⁴ Al-Maqqarī, paraphrasing the anonymous witness, describes how Abū l-Ḥasān, the father of Boabdil, favored his Christian wife and her sons over Boabdil, and how he raised taxes to fight against the Christians – although, like al-ʿUqaylī, only mentioning Fernando as master or *ṣāhib* of Castile.¹⁵ In this account, the

9 Celia del Moral has studied this letter in detail and made a Spanish translation: “La última misiva diplomática de al-Andalus: La *risala* de al-ʿUqaylī enviada por Boabdil al sultan de Fez en demanda de asilo,” in *El epílogo del Islam Andalusi: La Granada del siglo xv*, ed. Celia del Moral (Granada: 2002), 201–59. Although it is not dated and no indication of where it was composed is given, Moral thinks it must have been written before Boabdil left the Iberian Peninsula (“La última misiva,” 216).

10 Scholars such as Del Moral, María Jesús Viguera Molíns, and Fernando Nicolás Velázquez Basanta have called attention to the fact that until the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries, few Arabic sources on the Nasrids were used even among historians in the Arabic-speaking world. See Moral, “La última misiva,” 201–203; Viguera Molíns, “Sobre documentos árabes granadinos,” in *En el epílogo del islam andalusí*, ed. Del Moral (Granada: 2002), 117–37, at 119–121; and Velázquez Basanta, “La relación histórica sobre las postrimerías del Reino de Granada, según Ahmad al-Maqqarī (siglo xvii),” in *En el epílogo del islam andalusí*, ed. Del Moral (Granada: 2002), 481–554, at 482–83.

11 Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al-ṭīb min ġusn al-Andalus al-ratīb* (*Analectes sur l'histoire et la littérature des Arabes d'Espagne*), ed. Reinhart Dozy, vol. 2 (Leiden: 1855–1861), 819; Del Moral, “La última misiva diplomática,” 254. Del Moral points out that little is known about al-ʿUqaylī, beyond the fact that he served as private secretary to Boabdil.

12 Del Moral, “La última misiva diplomática,” 255.

13 Velázquez Basanta, “La relación histórica,” 497–98.

14 Velázquez Basanta, “La relación histórica,” 497–98.

15 Al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al-ṭīb*, 807–10.

peace accords between the Nasrids and Catholic Monarchs that Isabel renewed in 1475, 1478 and 1481 are described without mentioning Isabel's role in them, noting only that the accords were arranged between the Christians and the Nasrids. This source also gives a detailed account of the terms of capitulation of Granada, but again without mentioning Isabel's role.¹⁶

These examples show how a 17th-century Arabic scholar in the diaspora, al-Maqqarī, using 15th- and 16th-century sources, writes Isabel out of the tragic narrative of the fall of Granada in 1492. They also prove interesting in light of what a predecessor of al-Maqqarī, Eliyahu Capsali (1485–1555), had to say about the fall of Granada and the events of 1492. According to Capsali in his treatise *Seder Eliyahu Zuta* (Minor order of Elijah), *conversos* played important roles in 15th-century Iberian courts, including those of Navarre and Aragón. Capsali was a rabbi on the island of Crete in the city of Candia, then part of the Venetian territories along the frontier with the Ottoman Empire. He writes in Hebrew about Boabdil and the Nasrids, because their history is related to the fate of the Jews who were expelled in 1492.¹⁷ Despite focusing on non-Jewish history, the work's style – “a highly stylized Hebrew, interspersed with innumerable allusions to the Hebrew bible and rabbinic literature” – would have

16 Velázquez Basanta, “La relación histórica,” 535–43. Similarly, in the manuscript accounts of the battles leading up to that of Granada and in the account of the defeat of Granada that Alfredo Bustani found on loose folios written in Arabic in Morocco in 1937, the anonymous chronicler/s refer/s only to Fernando (as king or *malik* of Castile or as king of the Christians or infidels) (Alfredo Bustani, prologue, in *Fragmentos de la época sobre noticias de los Reyes Nazaritas o Capitulación de Granada y Emigración de los andaluces a Marruecos*, ed. Alfredo Bustani and trans. D. Carlos Quirós [Larache: 1940], xiii–xxiv). An oblique allusion to Isabel may be found when they mention that in 1489 the King of Castile, having given orders to the Lord of Granada that he hand over the Alhambra and thus thinking victory was at hand, went with his army and his women/wives and children to enter the city (*Fragmentos de la época*, ed. Bustani and trans. Quirós, 29, 33).

17 Martin Jacobs and Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi note that Capsali's style reflects more that of medieval Jewish chronicles and their biblical and rabbinic models than that of the emerging humanist historiography of the early modern period. See Martin Jacobs, “Exposed to all the Currents of the Mediterranean – A Sixteenth Century Venetian Rabbi on Muslim History,” *Association for Jewish Studies Review* 29.1 (2005): 33–60, at 33; and Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Seattle: 1982), 60–75. Jacobs points out, though, that Capsali differs from earlier Jewish models in that he focuses on Muslim history, particularly contemporaneous Ottoman deeds. By composing a chronicle of the Ottomans, “he not only picked a fashionable topic but also a typical genre of contemporary Italian literature” (Jacobs, “Exposed to all the Currents,” 34, 36). Capsali did live and study in Italy, in Padua, and (briefly) in Venice. Jacobs explores his intellectual indebtedness to contemporary Italian culture as well as to contemporary Jewish scholars such as Isaac Abravanel, David de Pomis, and Simone Luzzatto (Jacobs, “Exposed to all the Currents,” 36).

been designed for a traditionally-trained Jewish reader. Capsali offers several reasons for composing his history, including a desire to provide his readers with examples of God's justice and to show how the Ottomans were instruments of that justice.¹⁸ According to Capsali, God allowed the Turks to rise in order to punish Christians for their mistreatment of the Jews. In fact, Jacobs posits that Capsali identified the Ottoman Empire with the fourth or iron age of the book of Daniel's apocalyptic vision of history (Daniel 2:40). And the biblical Daniel (like Queen Esther) is, for Capsali, a precedent for exploring how Jews living in non-Jewish courts stood up for their fellow Jews and Jewish belief. Within this larger framework, Isabel and Fernando are examples of Christian monarchs whose treatment of the Jews justified Ottoman expansion into Europe.

Capsali creates a complex narrative in which both monarchs are compared to biblical oppressors and explains that Fernando and Isabel's conquest of Muslim Granada was contingent upon the expulsion of the Jews – the latter offered up by Isabel as a sacrifice to (a false) God. Unlike what we find in al-Maqqarī and his earlier Nasrid sources, for Capsali, Isabel is a major figure: an agent of evil who will stop at nothing to fulfill her desires. She is anti-Semitic despite the fact that Jewish courtiers helped her to become queen and despite the fact that her husband is, according to Capsali, the descendant of Jews. Capsali ignores Isabel's independence and sovereignty as Queen of Castile, and (as Ram Ben Shalom notes), he depicts her instead as an evil queen and a tool of the clergy.¹⁹

Capsali introduces Isabel into his narrative using the biblical model of Jezebel from 2 Kings:

King Juan [of Castilla] [...] had two children[,], a boy and a girl. The name of the boy was king Don Enrique, and the name of his daughter was Isabel (איזבל). She was really called Izabel/Jezebel (איזבל) because she tried to do evil in the eyes of the Lord, arousing his anger (2 Kings 17:17), like Jezebel, the daughter of Baal, king of the Sidonians, wife of Ahab, king of Israel (1 King 16.31), as will be discussed.²⁰

18 Jacobs, "Exposed to all the Currents," 38–40.

19 Ram Ben-Shalom, *Medieval Jews and the Christian Past: Jewish Historical Consciousness in Spain and Southern France* (Portland, OR: 2006), 219; Yolanda Moreno Koch, *El judaísmo hispano según la crónica hebrea de Rabí Eliyahu Capsali* (Granada: 2005), 175. As daughter of the former king of Castile, Juan 11, and half-sister to Enrique 1V, Isabel benefited from rumors about Enrique's wife Juana de Portugal's affair with Beltrán de la Cueva that called into question their daughter Juana's legitimacy (Teófilo Ruiz, *Spain's Centuries of Crisis: 1300–1474* [Oxford: 2007], 97–100).

20 Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own. I cite Aryeh Shmuelevitz, Shlomo Simonsohn, and Meir Benayahu's modern edition of *Seder Eliyahu Zuta*: Eliyahu Capsali,

Here Capsali uses the medieval technique of placing biblical citations in a new (desacralized) context, deploying the story of the biblical Queen Jezebel as a signpost guiding his readers to identify Isabel from this first mention of her in the text with a negative biblical model of female political authority.²¹ The biblical Jezebel actively sought to undermine Judaism and the sacred contract between the Israelites and the God of Israel. The biblical Jezebel in the book of Kings was a Sidonian queen who married the Israelite King Ahab and seduced him into worship of the idol Baal.²² Jezebel also established a cult of Baal in Israel. According to H. Jacob Katzenstein and S. David Sperling, the union of Ahab (King of Israel) and Queen Jezebel produced long-lasting negative effects in Israel among the nobles and merchant classes.²³ Jezebel “instituted the worship of the Tyrian Baal in Israel, and for her sake Ahab built a temple to Baal in Samaria that not only served the court of the queen and the Tyrian merchants, artists, and craftsmen, but deeply influenced the aristocracy of Israel.”²⁴ Ahab is depicted as a weak-willed Jewish king who fell sway to his strong-willed, non-Jewish queen. In Capsali’s narrative Fernando is similarly portrayed as a Jewish king or a king of Jewish descent who falls under the sway of – and plays second fiddle to – his evil, Gentile (i.e. non-Jewish) queen.

Capsali provides the story of Fernando’s great-grandmother Paloma, the most beautiful daughter of a Jewish noble from Spain whose beauty captivated the Admiral of Castile. This admiral, Don Fadrique Alonso, raped Paloma, and from this rape she conceived a son:

In the time of King Don [lacuna] the king of Spain, there was a Jewish woman named Paloma (פלור'מבא) which means pigeon/dove. And she was more beautiful and lovely than all the other nobles’ daughters. One day, when her father sent her to her mother’s house, [she went] accompanied by *male and female slaves* (Genesis 20:14) and other members of the household.²⁵

Seder Eliyahu zuta le-rabbi Eliyahu Qapsali, ed. Aryeh Shmuelevitz, Shlomo Simonsohn, and Meir Benayahu, vol. 1 (Jerusalem: 1975), 180. I also give the page numbers to the relevant passages in Yolanda Moreno Koch’s modern Spanish translation: Moreno Koch, *El judaísmo hispano*, 130.

21 On this technique known as *iqtibās* in the Judeo-Andalusi tradition see Ross Brann, “The ‘Dissembling Poet’ in Medieval Hebrew Literature: The Dimensions of a Literary Topos,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 107.1 (1987): 39–54, at 41.

22 2 Kings 17.

23 H. Jacob Katzenstein and S. David Sperling, “Jezebel,” in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, ed. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik, vol. 11 (New York: 2007), 333–34.

24 Katzenstein and Sperling, “Jezebel,” 333–34.

25 Capsali, *Seder Eliyahu Zuta*, ch. 57, 182; Moreno Koch, *El judaísmo hispano*, 133.

In this scene, Paloma is dressed in her finest, wearing lots of gold. On the way into the city, the Admiral of Castile (the historical Fadrique Alonso, the great-grandfather of Juana Enríquez, Fernando's mother) sees her and sends messengers to find out who she is. He finds out she is Paloma, the wife of so-and-so / *fulano*: פְּלוֹמָבָא אִשְׁת פְּלוֹנִי. The Admiral sends for her and rapes her: "The Admiral ordered that they bring her, and he raped her. He laid with her and impregnated her."²⁶ She goes home and tells her husband what has happened, and he spurns her. However, the admiral eventually took in and recognized her child as his own: "The Admiral accepted him and *took him as [his] son* (Ex. 2:10), he *loved him as his own* (1 Sam. 18:1) [...] [T]he Admiral named him as his sole heir."²⁷

Fadrique eventually makes this son (Alonso) his sole heir, and Alonso inherits his father's position, becoming Admiral of Castile. Fadrique not only bequeaths to him his position and wealth, but also marries him to the daughter of an important nobleman of Spain. He in turn has four daughters, three of whom marry kings and nobles. Of interest to Capsali is the fact that Joan II, King of Navarre and of Aragón, married Juana Enríquez (Fernando's mother and the historical great-granddaughter of this Fadrique) after the death of his first wife, Doña Blanca of Navarre. The origins of Juana Enríquez's great-grandmother, the mother of Alonso Enríquez, son of Fadrique, are unknown; however, Nicasio Salvador Miguel has found 14th- and 15th-century sources that do allude to the Jewish origins of Juana Enríquez, Fernando's mother. These sources include a letter by Fernán Díaz de Toledo to Lope de Barrientos in 1449 that mentions the Jewish origins of the Enríquez family. In addition, the Portuguese chronicler Fernão Lopez also referred to Alonso Enríquez, Juana's grandfather (the son produced by Paloma's rape in Capsali's narrative) as being "filho dua judia" in 1348.²⁸ Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo in *Batallas e quincuagenas* mentions some malicious gossipers who were saying that Alonso (Juana's grandfather) was Fadrique's son from a Jewish woman named Paloma.²⁹ This seems to be the account that Capsali relates in *Seder Eliyahu Zuta*. Although Fadrique is the twin brother of Enrique de Trastámara (Enrique II), the progenitor patriarch of the Trastámara line that would rule Aragón until the time of the Catholic Monarchs, Capsali's focus is not on how the Trastámaras usurped or consolidated power across the Peninsula. Rather, Capsali focuses on how the Jewish

26 Capsali, *Seder Eliyahu Zuta*, ch. 57, 183; Moreno Koch, *El judaísmo hispano*, 133–34.

27 Capsali, *Seder Eliyahu Zuta*, ch. 57, 183; Moreno Koch, *El judaísmo hispano*, 135.

28 See Nicasio Salvador Miguel, *Isabel la Católica: Educación, mecenazgo y entorno literario, historia y literatura* (Alcalá de Henares: 2008), 58.

29 Salvador, *Isabel la Católica*, 58.

lineage in the Trastámara line led the most influential Jewish politicians of the time to work actively to unify the Kingdoms of Castile and Aragón.

Capsali relates that Juana Enríquez, Paloma's great-granddaughter, and her husband, King Joan II of Aragón, together produce a son, Fernando of Aragón, Isabel's future husband. Capsali contextualizes Fernando's birth by quoting from the books of Job and Jeremiah:

He laid with her and she became pregnant and had a son named Fernando (פִּרְנָן נְדוּשׁ). It was like the day and night when it was said: 'A man-child is conceived' (Job 3:3). Cursed be the man who congratulates his father saying, 'You have had a boy,' filling him with pride. Such a man is like those in the cities that God destroyed, for the one who was conceived reigned in all of Spain and destroyed the descendants of Judah and in his ire has laid waste the strength of Israel, because he decreed the Expulsion in all of Spain, as we will relate below.³⁰

While claiming that the Jews of Spain will celebrate the union of Fernando and Isabel, Capsali is clear that Fernando's birth ushers in the beginning of the end for Iberian Jews. According to Capsali in subsequent chapters, God allowed Fernando to be born and eventually wed Isabel, unifying Castile and Aragón, because it was part of a providential plan with apocalyptic overtones. Capsali further clarifies that shortly after the birth, Fernando's mother (Juana Enríquez) had Carlos of Viana (Joan II's son by his first wife) poisoned so that Fernando could inherit his throne. In this detail Capsali's version echoes Iberian chroniclers.³¹

However, unlike Iberian chroniclers, Capsali does not portray Fernando and Isabel as monarchs of independent kingdoms whose marriage alliance leads to a negotiated form of shared governance, which is the image that Isabel and her propagandizers cultivated. Capsali underscores Fernando's role as unifier of the Peninsula and claims that Fernando's position allows for a unified Spain not seen since the mythical time of King Ispan:

The king of Aragón ruled over all of Spain, and since the days of Ispan (אִישַׁפְּאֵן) in Hispania, all of Spain had not been under one king, for many kings ruled over it. More than seven kings [ruled Spain]: the King of

30 Capsali, *Seder Eliyahu Zuta*, ch. 57, 183; Moreno Koch, *El judaísmo hispano*, 135–36.

31 Luis Suárez Fernández, *Los Trastámaras y los Reyes Católicos*, vol. 7 of *Historia de España*, ed. Ramón Menéndez Pidal (Madrid: 1985), 187–92. See also Norman Roth, *Conversos, Inquisition, and the Expulsion of the Jews from Spain* (Madison: 2002), 151.

Castile, the King of Aragón, the King of Catalonia (דיקטי'לויניא), the King of Vizcaya, the King of Navarre, the King of Granada, and others. But now this king rules over all the others, for, being King of Aragón, he also rules over Castile, the kingdom of his wife, Castile and its territories. There was no kingdom in Spain that was not under his control, except Granada, and he conquered it. God allowed him to conquer all of Spain because the allowed time was up for the Jews of Spain. God wanted there to be an expulsion (גירוש) so that no trace of the Jews remained in the land.³²

Here Capsali celebrates Fernando as King of Aragón who ruled over all the other kingdoms of the Peninsula (including that of his wife) but one: the Muslim Kingdom of Granada. Capsali is clearly familiar with the legend of Ispan or Espan, the nephew or son of Hercules, mythical conqueror of the Iberian Peninsula. According to medieval chronicles such as Alfonso X's *Estoria de España*, Hercules was the founder of the first Spanish monarchy via his son/nephew Espan.³³ Ana Domínguez Rodríguez notes that the narrative of Ispan in historiography arose out of a concern over genealogical legitimacy.³⁴ Such concern continued to be acute into the 15th century and – one would presume – among Capsali's Iberian informants. As Luis Fernández Gallardo and Patricia Grieve have shown, *converso* intellectuals such as Pablo de Santa María and Alonso de Cartagena continued to traffic in the myth of Ispan to bolster the legitimacy of the Trastámaras.³⁵

Capsali underscores that it is the king of Aragón, a king of Jewish descent, who rules over Castile and the rest of the Peninsula, and he does so according to God's will. According to Capsali, God uses Fernando as an instrument to enact the expulsion of the Jews. Capsali juxtaposes the impending (but as yet

32 Capsali, *Seder Eliyahu Zuta*, chp. 59, 187; Moreno Koch, *El judaísmo hispano*, 145. Capsali also mentions Ispan and Hercules in his first chapter concerning Spain and its origins (*Seder Eliyahu Zuta*, ch. 40, 144; Moreno Koch, *El judaísmo hispano*, 55).

33 Ana Domínguez Rodríguez, "Hércules en la miniatura de Alfonso x el Sabio," *Anales de Historia del Arte* 1 (1989): 91–103, at 96; Ruiz, *Spain's Centuries of Crisis*, 97–109. For how other Jewish scholars such as Abrahan Zacut and Isaac Abravanel depicted Hercules' role in Spanish history, see Ben-Shalom, *Medieval Jews and the Christian Past*, 194–98.

34 Domínguez Rodríguez, "Hércules," 96.

35 Patricia Grieve, *The Eve of Spain: Myths of Origins in the History of Christian, Muslim, and Jewish Conflict* (Baltimore: 2009), 74–76; Alfonso de Cartagena, *Anacefaleosis o genealogía de los reyes de España* (15th-century Ms. 815, Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid), trans. Juan de Villafuerte, ch. 4, fol. 11v. See also Luis Fernández Gallardo, "La obra historiográfica de dos conversos ilustres, don Pablo de Santa María y don Alonso de Cartagena," *Espacio, tiempo y forma* serie 3: *Historia medieval* 6 (1993): 249–86, at 267.

non-existent) expulsion with the happiness the Jewish communities feel when they receive news of Fernando's and Isabel's betrothal:

*In every province, wherever the king's command and his decree came (Esther 4:3), announcing that the king, the King of Aragón, ruled Castile, the Jews were happy and joyful, for they said to each other, he is our brother, our own flesh (Gen 37:27). He has Jewish blood.*³⁶

Capsali refers to Fernando's genealogy and the fact that he is the "descendant of Jews" before giving a more developed story about his Jewish great-grandmother as discussed above.³⁷ The quotation from the book of Esther 4:3 that Capsali uses to frame how the Jews receive the news that Fernando has wed Isabel ("In every province, wherever the king's command and his decree came") foreshadows the terrible betrayal of the Jews that Fernando will enact in proclaiming their expulsion. By framing the Jews' celebration of Fernando and his role as king of a unified Spain in the terms used to announce the biblical King Ahashverosh's edict – written by his evil adviser Haman and designed to destroy the Jews of Babylon in the book of Esther – Capsali communicates to his audience that the happy union of Isabel and Fernando is not what it seems. Here, though, Capsali uses it not to refer to the Edict of Expulsion, but rather to the official announcement of the marriage of Fernando and Isabel. This event was arguably the decisive factor that turned this king of Jewish origins against his own people, for in Capsali's version, Fernando is referred to repeatedly as "flesh of our flesh."³⁸

Capsali includes a detailed account of how the historical figures of Abraham Senior and his son-in-law Meir Melammed – founders of what Haim Beinart calls the "Senior Dynasty" – were instrumental in arranging the marriage of Fernando and Isabel.³⁹ In chapter 56 we find Capsali describing how Senior and Melamed arrive at their plan to marry Fernando to Isabel:

36 Capsali, *Seder Eliyahu Zuta*, ch. 59, 187; Moreno Koch, *El judaísmo hispano*, 144.

37 Capsali, *Seder Eliyahu Zuta*, ch. 56, 181–82; Moreno Koch, *El judaísmo hispano*, 133.

38 Capsali in chapter 58 turns to the book of Esther to frame the attitude of the Jews of Iberia toward acknowledging Fernando as their king, and accepting Isabel as their queen, if somewhat reluctantly: "because of all that was written in this letter, and of what they had faced in this matter, and of what had befallen them the Jews ordained and took it upon themselves (Esther 9:26–27) that the King of Aragón would govern and wed the queen Izabel, for they thought: After all *he is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh* (Genesis 2:23), we will deliver her to him because he is pleasing to us" (Capsali, *Seder Eliyahu Zuta*, ch. 58, 184–85; Moreno Koch, *El judaísmo hispano*, 138).

39 Haim Beinart includes a chapter on Abraham Senior's important role as court rabbi, tax collector for and adviser to the Catholic Monarchs, as well as his prominent role as

The people of Israel who were in Spain were important, and chief among all of them was Don Abraham Seneor (שיני"ור דין' אברם) who administered over all of the kingdom, and rabbi Meir Melamed (ר' מלמד מאיר), his brother-in-law גיסו [*son-in-law], who chose the king of Aragón (ר"י ד"י ארג'ון), even though he was not the best for the queen.⁴⁰

For Abraham Senior and Melammed the fact that Fernando is of Jewish descent will lead him to favor the Jews, who will be safe in his kingdom:

There were several powerful kings who were better than he [Fernando]. And they asked for Isabel's hand in marriage. And this king [...] was of Jewish descent (מזרע יהודים) and his grandmother was a Jew (זקנתו היתה יהודית). So they thought, he is our brother and of our flesh: we will give him to her [Isabel], for in our eyes this is correct. *He will have compassion upon us* (Micah 7:19) and by him and because of him God will give shelter and *we shall be fruitful in the land* (Gen 26:22). And now we will write down the geneology of the King of Aragón (ר"י דיר'גון) and how he was of Jewish descent.⁴¹

In Capsali's narrative, Fernando's Jewish origins are the decisive factor and explain why the important and powerful leaders of the Jewish community – Senior and Melammed – would be involved and have a vested interest in bringing the two monarchs together.

Both Senior and Melammed were important figures in the court of the Catholic Monarchs, as scholars such as Haim Beinart, Koch Moreno and others have noted.⁴² Senior was chief rabbi and supreme judge of the Crown of Castile, whose power was noted by contemporaries such as Alonso de Palencia and Abraham bar Shlomo (in *Sefer ha-Qabbalah*).⁴³ Senior was the chief

leader in the Jewish community in Haim Beinart, *The Expulsion of the Jews from Spain* (Portland: 2002), 413–519.

40 Capsali, *Seder Eliyahu Zuta*, ch. 56, 181–82; Moreno Koch, *El judaísmo hispano*, 132–33.

41 Capsali, *Seder Eliyahu Zuta*, ch. 56, 182; Moreno Koch, *El judaísmo hispano*, 133.

42 María García Casar, "Nuevas noticias sobre los Senior-Portel segovianos," in *Del pasado judío en los reinos medievales hispánicos: Afinidad y distanciamiento* (XIII Curso de Cultura Hispanojudía y Sefardí de la Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha), ed. Ricardo Izquierdo Benito and Yolanda Moreno (Cuenca: 2005), 135–46; Yolanda Moreno Koch, "La comunidad judía de Segovia y las consecuencias de una conversión al cristianismo: 1485–1486," *Estudios mirandeses: Anuario de la Fundación Cultural "Profesor Cantera Burgos"* 8 (1988): 101–10; Beinart, *Expulsion of the Jews*, 413–519.

43 Zvi Avneri, Avraham Grossman, and Alvin J. Reines, "Abrabanel, Isaac ben Judah," in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 276–79.

financier of the court, and from 1488 treasurer of the Santa Hermandad.⁴⁴ He and Melammed converted to Catholicism in 1492, with Senior taking the name Fernando Pérez Núñez Coronel, and Isabel and Fernando becoming their godparents. Both went on to occupy important positions in Segovia: Melammed was *contador mayor* of the city, with a permanent position on the town council, and Senior was appointed *regidor* after converting.⁴⁵

Senior and Melammed were powerful property owners, tax collectors and influential politicians in Castile both before and after the expulsion. This fact helps explain the central role they are given in Capsali's narrative. Capsali relates that Senior and Melammed circumvented resistance among the nobles at the Castilian court by secretly smuggling Fernando into the kingdom disguised in rags. He stayed at the house of one Rabbi Jacob, who Capsali tells us was later a witness to the expulsion, and then Capsali's informant about the events:

He [Fernando] arrived at the house of a Jew named Rabbi Jacob, a sharp and intelligent man. We [Capsali and Rabbi Jacob] *looked each other in the eye* (Jeremiah 32:4), and he was one of those expelled who received our protection. And I wrote down in a book, in ink, everything that he told me.⁴⁶

Here Capsali's account of the Jews of Iberia, their crucial role in the union of Fernando and Isabel, and his eye-witness source for the events leading to the expulsion come together. Capsali claims here to be using this Rabbi Jacob's journal as the source of his history of the events leading to the expulsion – including Isabel's union with Fernando. Capsali tells the reader that Rabbi Jacob was also a participant in the action: who housed Fernando as he left the Kingdom of Aragón in disguise.

In his final chapters detailing the expulsion of the Jews in 1492, Capsali returns to Abraham Senior as historical actor. According to Capsali, Senior and another powerful community leader, Isaac Abravanel, both intervened on behalf of the Jews. He compares both to the biblical Daniel, a courtier to a non-Jewish king (Darius the Mede in the time of Nebuchednezzar II). Like Senior, Abravanel was a tax collector for the Catholic Monarchs and an accountant for several of the most important nobles at court.⁴⁷ Norman Roth describes

44 García Casar, "Nuevas noticias," 137; Beinart, *Expulsion of the Jews*, 456–60.

45 Beinart, *Expulsion of the Jews*, 413, 461; Avneri, Grossman, and Reines, "Abrabanel."

46 Capsali, *Seder Eliyahu Zuta*, ch. 58, 185; Moreno Koch, *El judaísmo hispano*, 140.

47 Beinart, *The Expulsion of the Jews*, 501–04.

Capsali's account of Abravanel's intervention on behalf of the Jews of Spain as a "romantic" invention.⁴⁸ In it, Capsali tells us that Abravanel attempted to change their minds, then fled their wrath; but, unlike Senior, he did not give up his faith once it became apparent the monarchs would not change their minds:

In those days, don Isaac Abravanel, don Abraham Senior and the rest of the nobles of Israel presented themselves like Daniel before the king and queen. And they begged the king and queen to annul the calamity and abolish the edict, but they did not listen or pay attention. On that day, Don Isaac Abravanel agreed to speak frankly in defense of his people.⁴⁹

However, unlike in the book of Daniel – in which Daniel is successful in convincing King Darius not to persecute the Jews on the advice of an evil, anti-Semitic adviser – in Capsali's account, the Catholic Monarchs prove unresponsive to Abravanel's and Senior's defense of Judaism. They find Fernando unwilling to listen to them and their appeal for him to reverse the expulsion.⁵⁰ Receiving no sympathy from Fernando, Abravanel and Senior take their case to Isabel, whom Capsali spends even more time developing as a malignant force. Despite his fear, Abravanel speaks quite frankly, for he realizes that God has chosen to punish the Jews by means of the queen and her court: "He [Abravanel] decided to send his written plea to the queen and he was afraid, for he knew that he was destined to die, for God, praised be He, was taking revenge on the Jews through the queen and her court."⁵¹

Senior also writes to her and, according to Capsali, accuses her of being a liar and going back on her word.⁵² The queen is furious, forgetting all that Abravanel and Senior have done for her. The historical Abraham Senior lent large amounts of money to the queen, financed in large part the war against Granada, and was awarded with an immense yearly stipend; meanwhile, Abravanel helped her collect large quantities of money from Jewish communities throughout

48 Roth, *Conversos*, 298. Abravanel did leave Spain and he (and his family members) encountered some difficulty in liquidating their assets (Beinart, *The Expulsion of the Jews*, 512–19).

49 Capsali, *Seder Eliyahu Zuta*, ch. 69, 208; Moreno Koch, *El judaísmo hispano*, 183.

50 They went before the king, "but he would not listen and was not favorable to the Jews [...] and even though he spoke as if the expulsion was up for debate, in his heart he thought of nothing but destroying them" (Capsali, *Seder Eliyahu Zuta*, ch. 69, 209; Moreno Koch, *El judaísmo hispano*, 184).

51 Capsali, *Seder Eliyahu Zuta*, ch. 69, 209; Moreno Koch, *El judaísmo hispano*, 184.

52 Capsali, *Seder Eliyahu Zuta*, ch. 69, 209; Moreno Koch, *El judaísmo hispano*, 185.

Castile.⁵³ She forgets all this service and aid, trying to apprehend Abravanel, who escapes. Capsali does not go into the details of Senior's conversion and subsequent success as a *converso* in Castile, or the prominent positions he and his son-in-law are later given in Castilian politics. Nor does he mention Abravanel's illustrious career as a scholar in the Italian diaspora.⁵⁴

Senior, Abravanel, and even Fernando serve as secondary characters – pawns of both Isabel and God. Capsali intimates in the final lines of chapter 66 that Isabel is the one whose legacy will eclipse that of Fernando. He does this by putting the two monarchs in the roles of Saul and David from 1 Samuel 18: he claims that “*They have ascribed to Isabel ten thousands, and to Fernando they have ascribed thousands.*”⁵⁵ He substitutes Fernando for Saul, whose power is here eclipsed by that of David, the rising star who becomes the legendary King of Israel (with whom Capsali implicitly compares Isabel).

However, instead of saving the Jews, Isabel tries to destroy them. In chapter 67, Capsali argues that Isabel promised the Jews to God as an offering given in exchange for Granada and victory over the Muslims. Fernando, although angered by the queen's promise, nevertheless goes along with her plan out of fear that she will reveal his Jewish origins.⁵⁶ Capsali weaves allusions to the books of Esther and Isaiah throughout the chapter. He presents Fernando and Isabel in baroque detail as supervillains, best framed as the evil Ahashverosh and Haman, his crafty adviser from the biblical tale of Esther.⁵⁷ In

53 Avneri, Grossman, and Reines, “Abrabanel,” 276–79; Beinart, *The Expulsion of the Jews*, 416, 505.

54 He does note that Abravanel did escape: “They gave their written pleas to the queen, who opened them. She saw them and *trembled violently* (Genesis 27:33), because of Isaac Abravanel's words, his *hand was heavy upon* her (cf. 1 Samuel 5:7) and his mouth was full of reproaches. She tried to capture him, but he fled and escaped safely” (Capsali, *Seder Eliyahu Zuta*, ch. 69, 209; Moreno Koch, *El judaísmo español*, 185). We do know that Abravanel fled to Naples, where he wrote a commentary on the biblical book of Kings and a work on dogma. He served Alfons 11 but had to flee when the French sacked Naples in 1494. He went with the royal family to Messina and eventually to Corfu and Apulia, and then in 1503 to Venice. He continued writing throughout, producing several commentaries. He was buried in Padua in 1509, so at the end he died in the realm where Capsali was active, although there is no evidence they met (Avneri, Grossman, and Reines, “Abrabanel,” 276–79).

55 1 Samuel 18:8 (Capsali, *Seder Eliyahu Zuta*, ch. 67, 204; Moreno Koch, *El judaísmo hispano*, 175).

56 Capsali, *Seder Eliyahu Zuta*, ch. 67, 204; Moreno Koch, *El judaísmo hispano*, 174–75.

57 Like Ahashverosh, whose wife disobeys him in the book of Esther, Fernando cannot sleep (“*On that night the king could not sleep,*” Esther 6:1). Once the fate of the Jews of Spain is decided, their future is depicted as being as bleak as that which Isaiah prophesied (“*her*

Capsali's version, however, no savior appears, and so – without Esther to save them – Iberian Jews are murdered and expelled from the kingdom:

In the days of Ahashverosh [...] everyone remembered what he said. The faces of Israel were blackened like the sides of a blackened pot and at that moment all were impoverished. He, Ahashverosh, was unjust from the beginning of his reign until the end. He ruled in a tyrannical way and everything was put under the power of King Fernando. They all crowded around and came to him. *When I summon them, they stand at attention* (Isaiah 48:13); in him are personified all the attributes of Ahashverosh *like a garment that he wraps around himself, like a belt that he wears every day* (Psalms 109:19). He was worse than all who came before.⁵⁸

While Capsali wants his readers to equate Fernando with Ahashverosh, whose evil and defeat are celebrated each year during the holiday of Purim, he wants his readers to equate Isabel not with Vashti, Ahashverosh's murdered queen, or Esther, savior of the Jews – the women in the book of Esther; rather, Capsali identifies Isabel with Haman, Ahashverosh's counselor, intent on destroying the Jews of Babylon for his own personal benefit:

And Haman thought (Esther 6:6): by what means will he be appreciated by his God, *for you girded me with strength for the battle; you made my assailants sink under me* (Psalms 18:39). Although the people, who were still in exile, were not under his protection. *Israel is a hunted sheep driven away* (Jeremiah 50:17). *For how could this fellow reconcile himself to his lord? Would it not be with the heads of the men here?* (1 Samuel 29:4). The evil queen Isabel tried to destroy us and from then on she spent her time arguing with her husband: "Take the Jews out of my presence, let them be gone." For the friars predisposed her to do that and converted Israel into her enemy [...] when she saw that the king did not listen to her, she said to him: "You have reason to love the Jews, for you *are bone of* [their] *bones and flesh of* [their] *flesh* (Genesis 2:23); for this reason the Jews hate me, your people, for you have been for them *support and staff* (Isaiah 3:1)." ⁵⁹

nobility [that of Jerusalem] and her multitude go down, her throng and all who exult in her," Isaiah 5:14) (Capsali, *Seder Eliyahu Zuta*, ch. 67, 205; Moreno Koch, *El judaísmo hispano*, 176).

58 Capsali, *Seder Eliyahu Zuta*, ch. 67, 205; Moreno Koch, *El judaísmo hispano*, 177.

59 Capsali, *Seder Eliyahu Zuta*, ch. 67, 205; Moreno Koch, *El judaísmo hispano*, 178.

In this passage Isabel is portrayed as an evil queen under the sway of Catholic clerics intent on expelling the Jews from her kingdom. Capsali then tells us that Fernando's initial reaction to Isabel's request is anger: he throws his sandal at Isabel, allegedly hitting her on the side of the head. However, her words affect him, and Capsali tells us that on the battlefield fighting the Nasrids of Granada, Fernando remembers what she said:

When the king was fighting, he remembered the proposal of queen Isabel and all that she said to him. And he said, "I will satisfy the queen, so that she *would [not] take the credit away from me*, and say that I am a descendant of Jews. May her God listen, so that, in so doing, a people [that are so many] *they could not be counted or numbered* (1 Kings 8:5) may be converted to her faith." The two monarchs decided to do harm to the Jews [...] Such were that man and that woman. Both were enemies of Israel, and the will of one became that of the other. They cast lots over the tunic of the Jews *and the other lot for Azazel* (Leviticus 16:8).⁶⁰

Capsali elaborates on how Fernando and Isabel act in unison, together deciding to expel the Jews. He refers to Isabel's God (marking her god as different from that of Fernando and his own). He says explicitly that Fernando decided to expel the Jews because it was Isabel's will. In this passage, Capsali claims that Fernando had several motives: appeasing his wife, falling sway to a foreign god, and trying to protect his reputation. For Capsali, Fernando's Jewish lineage plays an important role in his decision-making. Fernando, despite his Jewish origins, will not save the Jews; instead, both he and Isabel become enemies of the Jewish people.

Capsali underscores in the next chapter the effect of the expulsion on the Jews, again weaving together the story with quotations from the book of Esther:

The king decided to expel all the Jews and was determined to take the life not of just one, but all of them: he decided to exterminate them [...] *Then the king's secretaries were summoned* (Esther 3:12) in the fifth month, called *febrero* in their language, the year 1492 of their calendar. And they recorded all that the king ordered the viceroys, governors, and princes of the cities to do to comply with the edict, butcher with his notched knife, *sackcloth and ashes* (Esther 4:1) without number.⁶¹

60 Capsali, *Seder Eliyahu Zuta*, chp. 67, 205; Moreno Koch, *El judaísmo hispano*, 178.

61 Capsali, *Seder Eliyahu Zuta*, ch. 68, 206; Moreno Koch, *El judaísmo hispano*, 179.

While among Iberian Jewish scholars there was some debate about whether in the book of Esther King Ahashverosh intended to exterminate all the Jews in his kingdom, or only to expel them, Capsali makes it clear that for Isabel and Fernando the intent was to kill them all – he says Fernando’s real intention was to exterminate them.⁶²

The expulsion is the ultimate act of evil enacted by the two monarchs whom Capsali has developed as providentially evil in the preceding chapters. By framing Isabel as comparable to Haman from the book of Esther or Jezebel – the evil queen of the Sidonians who convinced her husband, the king, to leave off worship of the God of Israel and who convinced him to exterminate the Jewish ruling class – and by depicting Fernando as Ahashverosh from the book of Esther (a king convinced by an evil adviser to exterminate the Jews in his kingdom), Capsali contextualizes the expulsion of the Jews in 1492 within historical and biblical precedents. Capsali locates the expulsion in the larger arc of Jewish history and culture, quoting the book of Esther with which his audience would be very familiar since it was read each year during Purim, commemorating annually the anti-Jewish violence that the Jews of Babylon faced under King Ahashverosh and his adviser Haman. Capsali, though, includes his own words to specify that the monarch and queen he mentions are not Ahashverosh and Vashti in Babylon but instead Fernando and Isabel, the monarchs of Spain.

Capsali is one of several 16th-century Jewish historians and intellectuals who were, in Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi’s words, “jolted by the catastrophe” of the expulsion in 1492.⁶³ Capsali – like Solomon Ibn Verga, the son of Sephardim who had been expelled – was forced in the aftermath of the expulsion “to re-examine the archetypal relationship between king and Jews and ask himself if it had not suffered some radical dislocation.”⁶⁴ As Barry Dov Walfish notes, Jewish scholars at the time of the expulsion such as Abraham Saba expressed their hope for redemption in commentaries on the book of Esther.⁶⁵ This is very different from the way in which the book of Esther and other redemptive tales such as that of Daniel are used by Capsali in *Seder Eliyahu*. In this text, the monarch (unlike Ahashverosh) accedes to the anti-Semitic violence of his adviser and queen, Isabel. Capsali’s narrative can be compared to another early

62 On Judeo-Iberian interpretations of the book of Esther, see Barry Dov Walfish, *Esther in Medieval Garb: Jewish Interpretation of the Book of Esther in the Middle Ages* (Albany: 1993), 70–72, 186–99.

63 Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *The Lisbon Massacre of 1506 and the Royal Image in Shebet Yehuda* (Cincinnati: 1976), 49.

64 Yerushalmi, *The Lisbon Massacre*, 49.

65 Dov Walfish, *Esther in Medieval Garb*, 91–96.

16th-century account of the expulsion and diaspora, Ibn Verga's *Shebet Yehuda*. Yerushalmi concludes that *Shebet Yehuda* is ultimately "an absolution of the king of Spain from real culpability in the Expulsion."⁶⁶ However, for Capsali, neither Fernando nor Isabel is free from guilt. Capsali relates in several passages how Isabel worked with Fernando to expel the Jews.

Susan Einbinder in *After the Black Death* argues that the responses of Provençal and Iberian Jews to another tragedy that befell Iberian Jews – namely the plague of the mid-14th century and the subsequent anti-Jewish violence caused by it – were accommodated by existing models. According to Einbinder, the existing literary and communal forms of grief were sufficient and viable modes for expressing their individual and collective traumas. The evidence shows that the various Jewish communities of Iberia and their members found viable means of responding to plague and anti-Jewish violence through traditional forms of communal expression, especially by locating this violence in the narratives of suffering found in liturgical laments, as well as through biblical allusions and exegesis.

Dov Walfish shows that 15th-century commentaries served a similar purpose for the Jews of the expulsion. Scholars such as Zechariah ben Saruk and Abraham Saba presented biblical narratives, including Saul's defeat of Amalek (Exodus 17:8–16) and Haman's defeat in the book of Esther, thereby assuring their readers that, despite current suffering and loss, God was on their side and would assure "their everlasting survival."⁶⁷ Similarly, Capsali uses biblical narratives of Jews living in diaspora under unjust monarchs and threatened with extinction as the woof out of which he weaves his own narrative of the expulsion of the Iberian Jews. The biblical narratives provide him several models of powerful and evil women and men such as Jezebel, King Ahashverosh, Haman and Nebuchadnezzar who worked against the Jews and sought their extermination. These sources contrast with the historical texts al-Maqqarī used to craft his account of the events of 1492 in which Isabel is eliminated from the account of the fall of Granada. Biblical paradigms – the book of Esther and 2 Kings – provide Capsali with models of women rulers that he uses to depict the Castilian queen as an active and decisive factor in the expulsion of the Jews.

In Nasrid histories Isabel is given no role in the defeat of Granada, but in Capsali's narrative Isabel is given an active role as anti-Semitic agent of evil in the tradition of Amalek and Haman. Writing from Crete in the Eastern Mediterranean, Capsali offers hope to Iberian Jews in the form of a future life

66 Yerushalmi, *The Lisbon Massacre*, 49.

67 Dov Walfish, *Esther in Medieval Garb*, 93.

in Ottoman and Italian lands, reflecting the future successes of the Sephardim in 16th-century communities such as Izmir and Constantinople. These triumphs were, as Jonathan Ray says, “evidence of God’s continued compassion for His chosen people.”⁶⁸

68 Jonathan Ray, “Iberian Jewry between West and East: Jewish Settlement in the Sixteenth-Century Mediterranean,” *Mediterranean Studies* 18 (2009): 44–65, at 49.

Windows into Souls: Isabel, Religion, and the Spanish Inquisition

John Edwards

According to Sir Francis Bacon, later the 1st Viscount St Albans (1561–1626), Elizabeth I of England, Wales, and Ireland, who reigned between 1558 and 1603, was exceedingly reluctant to delve into the personal religious beliefs of her subjects. This distinguished lawyer and essayist, a pioneer of natural and religious philosophy, asserted that Elizabeth – whose baptismal name, like the Spanish Isabel, derived from that of the Phoenician Queen Jezebel of Sidon, wife of King Ahab of Israel, and persecutor of the prophets of the Hebrew God (1 Kings 16:31, 18:4, 19:2) – did not like “to make windows into men’s hearts and secret thoughts.”¹ In later centuries Bacon’s words have often been misquoted as referring to windows into men’s souls, hence the phrase used in the title of this chapter.

In view of the record of the Biblical Jezebel as a pagan and a persecutor of godly Jews, it may seem somewhat surprising that the name – of which the etymology and meaning are disputed – became so popular in its various national linguistic forms during the medieval and early modern periods, and up to the present day. The issue here, however, is the religious identity of Isabel la Católica, both personally and politically, and above all her famous or notorious involvement with the establishment and operation of the Inquisition of the Catholic Church in Spain. This discussion will move, as it were, from the outside inwards: beginning with Isabel’s public practice and expression of the Christian religion according to the teachings of the Roman Church, and then examining her active support of ecclesiastical reform, including improvement of the quality of the clergy and a revival of religious life in monasteries, friaries, and convents. After that, attention will turn to the Inquisition itself, and to what its development has to say about Isabel’s personal approach to Jews and Judaism as well as to Muslims and Islam. The chapter will also approach the inner religious life of the Queen by focusing on her devotional and spiritual side in the context of trends in Spanish Christianity which would, after her death,

¹ Francis Bacon, *Works* (London: 1838), 1:387.

provide an interesting and important link to the 16th-century Reformation. The concluding assessment of Isabel's religion will contain a consideration of modern attempts (so far unsuccessful) to have her declared a Catholic saint. As always, in discussions of Isabel's life and character, it is important to bear in mind the common agency of the queen and her husband, Fernando of Aragon.

As in other late medieval monarchies – notably in England, France and the Netherlands – the best indication of a ruler's public presentation of his or her religion was to be found in their Royal Chapel, and the Castilian *capilla* of Isabel was no exception. The clergy and singers travelled with the monarchs, often separately in the cases of Isabel and Fernando (who had his own Aragonese Chapel); and the complex Catholic liturgy, including the 'Hours' of the Divine Office and the sacrament of the Eucharist, i.e. the Mass, shaped both rulers' lives. This was so even when they were involved in war, as well as more routine government business.

The most complete and detailed sources for the day-by-day operation of Isabel's chapel were in fact composed in 1505, just after her death, but reflected the reforms which she and her husband had carried out.² The Roman liturgical calendar used in the Royal Chapel (as elsewhere in Catholic Europe) contained a series of major festivals throughout the year, which fell (and fall) into various categories. The most important were the Feasts commemorating Jesus Christ himself: Christmas (the Nativity), Holy Week (the Passion of Christ), Easter and the Ascension, the giving of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Whitsun), and also, by the 15th century, the great celebration of the Body and Blood of Christ, Corpus Christi, on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday, which brought this cycle to an end. Next in importance were the Feasts of Jesus's Mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary, the most important of which were her Nativity (8 September), the Annunciation to her of the birth of Christ (25 March), her Purification after that birth (known in northern Europe as Candlemas, 2 February), and her Assumption into heaven (15 August). Also by the late 15th century on every day of the year, saints were commemorated with special prayers and masses. Some of these celebrations were major feasts with elaborate liturgies in great cathedral

2 Archivo General de Simancas (hereafter AGS), leg. 25, no. 1: "Las reglas y constituciones de la Capilla Real del Serenísimo Rey de las Españas," published by José García Oro as "Las constituciones de los Reyes Católicos para la Capilla Real de España," in *Noscere sancta: Miscellanea in memoria di Agostino Amore OFM* (Rome: 1985), 1:283–326. A shorter version of the same material is AGS, leg. 25, no. 83: "Las ordenanças de la Capilla de los muy poderosos señores el Rey don Fernando y la Reyna doña Isabel son en suma las siguientes 34, que aunque en la real capilla estavan escriptas *ad longum*, aquí no se escribía sino el sumario de ellas." See also Álvaro Fernández de Córdova, *La Corte de Isabel I. Ritos y ceremonias de una reina (1474–1504)* (Madrid: 2002), 280.

and monastic churches as well as in the Royal Chapel. Among the most notable were the feasts of Saints Gregory the Great (3 September), Augustine of Hippo (28 August), George (23 April), Martin of Tours (11 November), Francis of Assisi (4 October), and Dominic (8 August), while Isabel may have felt a particular devotion to the most prominent female saints in the calendar: her namesake Elizabeth (5 November), Helen (18 August), Cecilia (22 November), Catherine of Alexandria (25 November), and Lucy (13 December).³

From time to time, more political feasts were added to the liturgical calendar, one of these being a celebration of the victory of Isabel and Fernando over their rivals for the Castilian throne, Juana and Afonso of Portugal, in the third battle of Toro (1479). However, in accordance with the magnitude of the Spanish monarchs' triumph over the Emirs of Granada in January 1492, the most spectacular special liturgy was composed. The author of the specific (in liturgical terminology, "proper") material in this Office, who also selected the Biblical readings for the relevant Hours (Vespers and Matins), sermon and masses, was none other than Friar Hernando de Talavera, who was both a confessor to the Queen and the first Archbishop of newly-conquered Granada.⁴ In his early 19th-century collection of materials in praise of the Catholic Queen, Diego Clemencín included correspondence between her and Talavera concerning this Office. She first expressed her enthusiasm to see the text which he had compiled; then, when she had done so, the archbishop complained that she was holding on to it too long.⁵

For Isabel as for all Spanish Christians of the period, Holy Week – from the commemoration of Jesus's entry to Jerusalem on Palm Sunday to the celebration of his resurrection on Easter Day – was the culmination of the Church's liturgical year. Her Royal Chapel was granted special papal privileges such as the setting up of a *monumento* for the keeping ('reservation') of the consecrated host from the commemoration of the Lord's Supper on Holy (Maundy) Thursday until Easter Eve (Holy Saturday). This privilege was granted by Innocent VIII (23 August 1486), and the *monument* concerned – which performed a similar function to the 'Easter Sepulcher' in English churches – was made of wood with a cross on top of it, covered with black and silver cloth (or paper) and surrounded by large liturgical candles (*hachas*).⁶ An innovation of

3 García Oro, "Constituciones," 304–05.

4 Tarsicio de Azcona, "El oficio litúrgico de Fray Fernando de Talavera para celebrar la conquista de Granada," *Anuario de historia de la Iglesia* 1 (1992): 71–92.

5 Diego Clemencín, *Elogio de la Reina Católica doña Isabel: Memorias* (Madrid: 1821), 379.

6 Rafael Domínguez Casas, *Arte y etiqueta de los Reyes Católicos: Artistas, residencias, jardines y bosques* (Madrid: 1993), 214.

Isabel's time which may or may not indicate her particular devotion and concern for her less privileged subjects was the introduction of the washing of the feet of seven poor men during mass on Holy Thursday.⁷ This has since become a normal part of the Catholic liturgy.

In the case of a reigning monarch, it is of course difficult to distinguish between actions done as aspects of that public role and a personal commitment to the Christian faith. A good example of this dilemma is the question of gifts (the "offertory") during celebrations of the Mass. According to the surviving records, the amounts given by Isabel were set and accounted for by the royal treasury and consisted of gold or silver coins. In the early 1500s the receiver (*receptor*) of the Royal Chapel, Lópes de Tableizo, recorded the relevant sums in his accounts: for example, 12,610 *maravedíes* on the feast of St. George (23 April); 8000 *mrs* for the Lenten office (*oficio de cuaresma*); 13 *doblas* at Epiphany (6 January); 10 *doblas* each at Christmas and Easter; and similar amounts at the New Year, on Good Friday, and at Pentecost (Whitsun).⁸ The largest offering was on Maundy Thursday, which could amount to 301 gold florins (80,491 *mrs*).⁹ The fact that the royal children took part in these major offerings indicates that the money came from the royal exchequer, rather than personal funds. Even so, other sources appear to indicate a much more personal Christian commitment on the part of the queen.¹⁰ As early as 1466, when Isabel was just 15 years old (and by no means certain to reach the Castilian throne), Pope Paul II granted her permission to take with her a portable altar so that mass might be celebrated with a congregation of up to twelve people wherever she went. This permission was granted amidst the turbulent conditions of Enrique IV's reign even if the Castilian Church was at the time under interdict, which otherwise suspended the sacraments. At the same time – and for the duration of her life – her confessors were granted the power to absolve her even of sins for which normally only the pope could grant absolution, should she ever commit them. This was a very exclusive spiritual insurance policy. For Catholic rulers, one of which she eventually became, there was always tension between the spiritual ("contemplative") and the political ("active") life. Isabel was no exception. As queen she would attend mass daily, at an early hour, in her nomadic court, seated on a special, upholstered, and cushioned seat, hidden from the rest of the congregation by curtains, in the style of the former Byzantine emperors. Yet despite all this ceremony, it is hard

7 Fernández de Córdova, *La Corte*, 281.

8 *Cuentas*, 2, 150, 540, 544, 583–585, 594–598, 161.

9 *Cuentas*, 1, 43.

10 Fernández de Córdova, *La Corte*, 288.

to escape the conclusion that she was deeply concerned with the spiritual heart of Christian worship.

Friar Hernando de Talavera's treatise on how to spend one's time profitably, *De como se ha de ordenar el tiempo para que sea bien expedido* (How time must be ordered so that it may be well spent), was actually written for a Castilian noblewoman, the Countess of Benavente, but its teachings would surely have applied equally to Queen Isabel.¹¹ During the celebration of the Divine Office (Matins, Vespers, etc.), the lady in question should pay full attention and not be spoken to by a secretary, page, or maid (*doncella*) unless it were necessary ("sino fue necesario") – a proviso which reveals much about the tension between Court activity and the lengthy religious services which were a major part of the day's schedule. During mass, on the other hand, Talavera accepted that aristocratic (and royal) ladies would spend a great deal of their time with their own, private devotional books which normally consisted of psalms and prayers ("Books of Hours") or else – as mentioned here by Talavera – the very popular "Mass of Our Lady" (*Misa de Nuestra Señora*), which contained 'proper' material, and often manuscript illuminations, concerning the Virgin Mary. However, while the Gospel reading was being sung or said, noble or royal ladies were expected to pay full attention to it. Also, when mass was being celebrated in a domestic setting, instructions had to be given to those who did not attend the service to go about their business as quietly as possible, so that there was no "talking or noise" (*hablas ni ruido*). Those who could not fully understand the Latin text of the liturgy (some scholars believe Isabel's knowledge of the language was limited)¹² were nevertheless to be instructed in the mystical and religious meaning of the various phases of the mass in particular. Thus, Talavera told the Countess of Benavente: "If you wish to look at and contemplate the mysteries of those holy ceremonies, perhaps it would be worth as much as, or more than, praying."¹³ Elsewhere, the friar outlined for the countess the specific meaning of various parts of the liturgy and of those who carried it out. Thus, the servers (crucifer, acolytes, thurifer, etc.) at a high mass represented, in the mind of the worshipper, both the prophets who came before Jesus and the angels who greeted his birth. The celebrant, whenever he addressed the congregation with the words "The Lord be with you" (*Dominus vobiscum*), represented Christ greeting his disciples after his resurrection (John 20:19). When he dismissed the people at the end of the service with the words *Ite, missa est* (commonly

11 *Escritores místicos españoles*, Nueva Biblioteca de Autores Españoles 1 (Madrid: 1911), 102.

12 On Isabel's acquisition of Latin see the essay by Elizabeth Teresa Howe in this volume.

13 "Si quisiéredes algunas veces mirar e contemplar los misterios de estas santas ceremonias, quizá valdría tanto o más que rezar" (cited in Fernández de Córdova, *La Corte*, 287).

paraphrased as “The mass is ended”), he represented the angels who similarly dismissed the disciples when they were gazing into the sky after Jesus’s ascension (Acts 1:10–11). Many have seen, in the phases of the liturgy and in such attempts to give them a spiritual meaning, the beginnings of modern Western drama, for example in the reign of Isabel and Fernando.¹⁴

Most of the language and gestures of the liturgy fell to the clergy, although congregants made responses, crossed themselves, and bowed or knelt at various points during the service. As far as Isabel was concerned, however, her regal status presented more opportunities to participate physically and directly. Thus, her gifts (whether from her own or the Crown’s resources) were given during the offertory (bringing and preparation of the bread and wine) at mass. She, like her husband, also had the power to choose court preachers, who might – as was also customary in other monarchies, such as those of France and England – sometimes criticize their sovereigns quite severely. After the consecration of the elements, the queen would also share in the passing of the *pax* to symbolize participation by the people in the acts of the celebrant at the altar. In Spain, as elsewhere in Western Europe, this ‘peace’ (*portapaz*) was normally a metal token, often studded with precious stones, which was first kissed by the celebrating priest and then passed from hand to hand, beginning with the assisting sacred ministers and servers and then among the congregation, generally in order of their social rank. When it came to liturgical and royal protocol, Isabel seems to have been strict, rebuking clergy and servers for any *faux pas*. In the Royal Chapel, it was also customary for the deacon to bring the Gospel book to be kissed by any member of the royal family who was present.¹⁵ Many sources indicate that, in addition to attending mass at least once a day, Isabel also frequently appeared in chapel to attend the liturgical hours of the Divine Office, which were normally a matter for clergy and choir. However, there were those who thought that she was spending too much time in the ‘contemplative’ life of worship, and not enough in the ‘active,’ governmental life of a queen regnant. The personal faith of Isabel will be considered later; but, first, her well-known and highly public commitment to church reform will be considered now.

Tarsicio de Azcona summarized the agenda of Isabel and her husband for the Spanish Church as a series of measures to control an institution which formed a large and essential part of the social and economic fabric of their kingdoms. Like the monarchy, the institutional Catholic Church was hierarchical;

14 See, for example, Ronald E. Surtz, *Birth of the Theater: Dramatic Convention in Spanish Theater from Juan del Encina to Lope de Vega* (Princeton: 1979), 41.

15 Fernández de Córdova, *La Corte*, 288–89.

therefore, a primary purpose of both monarchs – as of other rulers in Western Europe at the time – was to control, as far as possible, the appointment of Spanish bishops, which was legally vested in the papacy. They were also concerned to influence (and, if possible, control) the appointment of men – they were, of course, always men – to important posts as deans and canons of cathedrals. Equally important, especially as far as Isabel was concerned, were the intellectual and moral qualities of all the clergy. In accordance with the prevailing preconception of the period, Isabel and Fernando took a ‘trickle-down’ approach to the religion of their subjects, as they did to their own monarchical authority. They therefore assumed that better priests would automatically produce better congregations in moral and spiritual terms; but they well knew that – thanks to the Catholic beliefs to which they held firm – they had to take account of the Holy See of Rome in anything they tried to do in relation to the Spanish Church. The proportion of the economic resources of the Crowns of Castile and Aragon which lay in the hands of the institutional Church cannot, of course, be calculated with any precision, but they were considerable. They included not only lands and rents but also jurisdiction (*abadengo*) over towns and vassals.

When Henry VIII attempted to gain full control of the Catholic Church in England, until he arrived at formal schism he was simply following a policy that had been adopted not only by his predecessors on the English throne, but also by the rulers of France and Spain. Whatever their personal adherence (or otherwise) to Catholic Christianity, Isabel and Fernando clearly regarded ‘their’ Church as an essential facet of their own sovereignty. As far as the Crown of Castile was concerned, this overall policy included an attempt to bring diocesan boundaries into line with current political jurisdictions, though local interests – both episcopal and secular – stoutly resisted their efforts in this respect. When it came to influencing the appointment of bishops, on the other hand – although this remained ultimately in the control of the pope – they achieved more success, despite a great deal of controversy. Back in 1418, at the end of the ‘Great Schism’ of the Western Church (1378–1415) (in which Spain had been involved along with other Western European countries), the pope of the newly reunited Church, Martin V, had on 13 May of that year made a concordat with the “Spanish nation” (*la nación española*) to allow cathedral chapters to elect freely their diocesan bishops, subject to ratification by the pope. This measure had been resisted immediately by Juan II of Castile, who agreed that the canons should indeed elect their bishops, but chose only those who were favored by the Crown (*pro quibus regem interest*). The pope might only appoint Spanish bishops directly when the diocesan concerned had actually died in Rome. This battle between royalty and the papacy was still very

much alive in the reigns of Isabel and Fernando. Before the accession of Isabel in Castile, successive popes had disputed the matter with Juan II and Enrique IV. As in other monarchies in the period, it continued to be convenient to the Crown that some dioceses should receive non-Spanish bishops, usually Italian cardinals, who might represent the country in the papal curia.¹⁶ In the difficult and unstable political situation of Castile in the 1460s and 1470s cathedral chapters, the crown and the papacy regularly disputed provisions to dioceses and, in their crucial agreement for the future governance of the Crown of Castile made at Segovia on 15 January 1475, Isabel and Fernando agreed to seek university graduates (*letrados*) to fill episcopal vacancies as well as those of priories, abbeys and the military orders, along with other major Church benefices.¹⁷ The irregular church council or 'congregation' which was summoned by the king and queen to Seville in July 1478 agreed that the crown should take the initiative in naming new bishops and that the pope should simply ratify such appointments, thus marginalizing cathedral chapters, whose role was henceforward to be purely formal.¹⁸ Isabel's reign did not see the end of the canons' aspirations, and various chapters – including those of Sigüenza, Oviedo, Tuy, Palencia, and Cuenca – strongly (though ultimately unsuccessfully) resisted the appointment of bishops by agreement between crown and papacy. In Azcona's considered view, Isabel and her husband were much influenced by anti-curial bishops; but they always retained a pragmatic approach, which from time to time produced concessions and enabled them to establish what might be regarded as a 'national Catholic' Church.¹⁹

The almost continual sparring among various ecclesiastical interests, which frequently involved the deployment of 'spiritual' sanctions – in particular, excommunication and interdicts – would long outlast Isabel's lifetime. When she died, she instructed her daughter and successor, Juana (reigned 1504–55), and the latter's husband Philippe (reigned 1504–06), to continue her policy of not allowing Spanish benefices to go to foreigners, which was an evident hazard with the arrival in Spain of a Habsburg king consort and his Netherlandish courtiers, including clergy. Isabel could also list some major gains to her credit in opposition to the 'universal monarchy' claimed by the pope, notable among them ecclesiastical patronage of the Church in the recently conquered kingdom

16 Tarsicio de Azcona, *Isabel la Católica: Estudio crítico de su vida y su reinado*, 3rd ed. (Madrid: 1993), 544–52.

17 Azcona, *Isabel*, 552–53.

18 Fidel Fita, "Concilios españoles inéditos: Provincial de Braga de 1261 y nacional de Sevilla de 1478," *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia* 22 (1893): 209–57.

19 Azcona, *Isabel*, 554–63.

of Granada and the Canary Islands, with negotiations continuing (ultimately successfully during the reign of her grandson Charles V, on 23 September 1522), for a similar degree of control over the Church in the Americas.²⁰ The queen's eagle eye fell not only on institutional and economic matters but also on the quality, both educational and moral, of the Spanish clergy.

Isabel appears to have developed firm ideas on this subject (as on so many others) from a young age. Once she and her husband were sovereigns, they worked on this issue together, even keeping a talent-spotting notebook containing the names of up-and-coming clerics. Unfortunately, this document no longer survives; but the evidence of the appointments and promotions which were made clearly demonstrates in practice the criteria followed by the king and queen in this respect. Their main preoccupation was with the occupiers of senior posts, especially those of bishop, cathedral dean and archdeacon. Not only should these men be native-born subjects, but they should hold at least middling social rank and be well-educated, meaning that they should preferably be *letrados* – that is, possessors of university degrees, most commonly in law. In this respect, senior or aspiring churchmen should be very much the equivalents of their contemporaries in government service. Along with their educational qualifications, Isabel and Fernando's churchmen were to be of good moral character and, in particular, remain entirely celibate. This, however, proved to be a difficult aspiration to meet in a country where papal insistence that no clergy should marry had for centuries been honored as much in the breach as in the observance. It should be said, nevertheless, that the proliferation in Spain and other European countries of often acerbic and brilliant satirical poetry and prose lampooning the clergy for their vices may have the effect of distorting historians' assessment of the true moral quality of late medieval Catholic clergy. It seems clear, moreover, that Isabel took personal action on various occasions, often behind the scenes, to secure adherence to her high moral criteria.

As far as the social class of members of the clergy was concerned, exceptionally even members of the *pueblo bajo* (ordinary people) might achieve advancement in clerical ranks. Nonetheless, the entire model for the Catholic clergy – in Spain as in other countries – was based on the assumption that good 'leadership' would automatically lead to good followers. Yet Isabel's and Fernando's church could not evade the perennial problem that bishops and other leading clergy inevitably spent much of their time at the royal court, and hence provided no pastoral care for the Christian souls committed to

20 Azcona, *Isabel*, 567–68.

their charge. Thus, bishops might do service to the crown as officials of the government, diplomats (often internationally) and negotiators in political matters. Such duties inevitably took them away from their pastoral duties for long periods, or even permanently. Also, the monarchs were quite capable of exiling bishops from their dioceses in order to keep an eye on them at court. Sometimes the supposed grounds for such action were political, for example in the case early in their reign of Luis de Acuña, Bishop of Burgos, who had supported their rivals to the Castilian throne, Juana and Afonso. Isabel and Fernando seem to have had no difficulty obtaining papal permission to do such things. Acuña spent some years in effective quarantine at court.²¹

As far as educational qualifications were concerned, under Isabel and Fernando, bishops continued to be recruited frequently from the Colegio Mayor (graduate college) de San Bartolomé, in the University of Salamanca. There, as in universities all around Western Europe, many of the successful candidates for high office in the Church were boys of fairly low status and limited means who had received financial support from wealthier clergy or lay people. At this time additional graduate colleges were founded to train the higher cadres of the clergy, notably Santa Cruz in Valladolid, established by Cardinal Pedro González de Mendoza, and the college of Santiago 'el Zebedeo' (St. James, son of Zebedee), which was established in Salamanca by Bishop Diego Ramírez de Villaescusa. From 1499 Cardinal Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros began to set up the University of Alcalá de Henares and, just after the accession of Charles to the Spanish Crowns in 1517, the College of San Salvador de Oviedo was established for the same purpose in Salamanca. Archbishop Alfonso de Fonseca founded there the College of Santiago ('del Arzobispo').

While there is a tendency in much of both traditional and current historiography of Isabel and her reign to portray her as a 'modernizer' in her efforts to strengthen and consolidate royal authority, it should always be remembered that, like other late medieval and early modern rulers, she always clothed her reforms in the garments of tradition. In the case of church appointments, she had a sound legal basis for doing so, both in Castilian legislation and in the canon law of the Church. Both she and her husband had a 'high' view of monarchical authority based on late Roman and Byzantine concepts and practice; but they were also wily political realists. They were always ready to take an opportunity to intervene in Church affairs when the occasion arose, notably when there were difficulties in the succession to bishoprics and deaneries. They were especially keen to use their own officials to administer vacant

21 AGS Patronato Real 16-36; Azcona, *Isabel*, 559-68.

dioceses, especially when these contained strategically important castles and other fortifications which were normally under episcopal jurisdiction. Such activities could in fact be justified by papal legislation through particular decretals which allowed rulers to take action in cases in which an appointment was believed to threaten the safety of their kingdoms. This argument was habitually deployed in advice to the Castilian Crown by jurists such as Alfonso Díaz de Montalvo and Juan López de Vivero or Palacios Rubios. In its opposition to papal claims to appoint leading Spanish churchmen, the crown often attempted to affirm what it regarded as practice since 'time immemorial,' but this amorphous concept generally (and perhaps inevitably) lacked a solid documentary basis. In the absence of proof, royal lawyers used arguments for patronage rights and the right of conquest – the latter in cases where churches had been regained, in previous centuries, from Muslim rulers. In the context of Spain, this argument could be held to cover cathedrals, collegiate churches, and parishes. When challenged on these grounds, the Roman curia inevitably asked for supporting documentation – which was, of course, often hard to find.

Even if Isabel never seriously considered a complete break from Rome, she helped to ensure that her rights were exerted to their maximum extent.²² Azcona calculates that Isabel and Fernando intervened, during their reigns, in no fewer than 132 episcopal appointments. Out of the successful candidates, 32 were of upper noble, or in some cases even royal, origin; no fewer than 74 came from the regional nobility or a background in the learned professions; just six were from the native 'ordinary people' (*pueblo llano*), and 20 were Italians with curial responsibilities – supposedly, and often in fact, on Spain's behalf. The result was a bench of bishops with an overriding concern to support and represent the interests of the Castilian and Aragonese Crowns, with bishops as members of the Royal Council (*Consejo Real*), the High Court (*Audiencia* or *Chancillería*) and – as Spanish government became more complex in the late 15th century – the growing number of Councils of State, beginning with that of the Inquisition (*La Suprema*). The Spanish Church, or at least its leaders, evidently saw it as their duty to support the government at all times and to pray for its victories, both in Granada and abroad. The institution was there to pray for the 'triumphs' of the sovereigns as well as contributing significantly to their efforts in financial terms.²³

One of the clearest indications of Isabel's personal understanding of the nature of Christianity, as well as that of her husband, was their repeated

22 Azcona, *Isabel*, 575–83.

23 Azcona, *Isabel*, 584–85.

concern for the moral quality of the clergy at all levels. The upper clergy were seen to be pillars of society in its widest sense, but most of Isabel and Fernando's subjects would normally have come into contact with the army of parish priests, chaplains and friars who generally lived at a much lower social and economic level. As elsewhere in Western Europe at the time, jurisdictional disputes between ecclesiastical and secular courts were a constant feature of life, and the crown frequently made use of these existing conflicts to defend – and, if possible, extend – its control over the lives of communities and individuals. Such disputes, notably in the vast primatial see of Toledo and its equivalent in Santiago de Compostela, continued even during the Granada war (1482–92). A royal proclamation (*pragmática*), dated 23 June 1503 and directed to Galicia, perfectly demonstrates royal thinking at the end of Isabel's reign. It states that the queen fully recognized the validity of ecclesiastical jurisdiction but insisted that lay officials, not clergy, should always be employed to carry out the necessary legal work, meaning that spiritual sanctions (excommunication and interdict) should not be used in legal disputes. Similar documents had been sent to all other Castilian dioceses in the previous year (21 February) as part of what appears to have been a systematic attempt by the crown to clip the wings of ecclesiastical legal officials.²⁴ Thus on 10 January 1502 another *pragmática* went so far as to forbid ecclesiastical lawyers to carry the wand (*vara*) of justice, which was to be reserved for royal officials, whether national or local.

As in other Western European monarchies, notably France and England, legal cases which involved both ecclesiastical and secular individuals and institutions were a perennial source of conflict. It was very common for lay people to take their cases to church courts in the expectation of lighter punishment and better terms than were available from royal and seigneurial tribunals. Sometimes, though, ecclesiastical judges would imprison members of the laity, and the crown commonly sought to have such people transferred to crown custody. Another area in which the two jurisdictions frequently came into conflict was that of trade and the resulting disputes, for example in cases of debt. Sometimes debtors were given sanctuary in churches, while in other cases individuals who were dissatisfied with the judgment they received from the church's judges tried to take their case to the crown courts, which were generally happy to receive them. As the 1502 pragmatics indicate, the crown also sought to exclude ecclesiastical judges from civil cases, for example those

24 *Recopilación de algunas bulas*, fol. 11v.

involving contracts. In these cases, Isabel's attitude was totally in accord with that of other late medieval rulers, including her husband.²⁵

Returning to another of Isabel's major concerns in the area of religion, she was always confronted with the dilemma of ease of access to the clerical ranks, which inevitably carried with it the danger of admitting unsuitable people. More manpower was always in the interest of leading clerics such as bishops and cathedral deans. The problem started with the simple act of having one's head tonsured, which was enough to give a boy or young man access to the clerical estate along with its legal and financial privileges. Admission to the four minor clerical orders up to that of sub-deacon was quick and easy, and even the major orders of deacon and priest were often obtained without any serious interrogation of the candidate's qualities. This problem always worried Isabel. On 26 April 1503 she accused the vicar-general of the Cuenca diocese and his colleagues of sacrificing standards to financial gain in the treatment of candidates for ordination. She demanded action from the pope to remedy matters.²⁶ In the meantime the crown took its customary legal route in efforts to deal with what it regarded as abuse of the clerical order, and hence failure to minister adequately to the Christian faithful. As early as 1478 a special church council of Seville had been instructed by the sovereigns to adopt special measures. Bishops were required to ensure that those who claimed to be clergy really did have a tonsure, and that they dressed modestly and soberly. Those who received tonsure under the age of 14 would henceforward need the specific permission of their parents, who thereby offered them for life to the Church.²⁷ Alexander VI did make a limited effort to respond to Isabel's appeal for help in disciplining the Castilian clergy, but (perhaps inevitably) the problem remained unsolved at her death. By November 1504 some clergymen still had female partners and thus were *amancebados*, while others continued to ape their secular contemporaries by dressing as laymen and even carrying weapons.²⁸

Another issue on the royal agenda was monastic reform. By the time Isabel seized the Castilian throne in December 1474, the Spanish Church was riven by conflict over the manner in which the religious orders should live and carry out their ministry. Partly thanks to the high level of literacy of these orders in Isabel and Fernando's time, and partly because of the zeal of members of those same orders from then until the present day in recounting their and their brothers'

25 Azcona, *Isabel*, 588–95.

26 *Libro de cédulas*, 7, fol. 10 (Alcalá de Henares, 26 April 1503).

27 Fita, "Concilios españoles inéditos," 223–24.

28 Azcona, *Isabel*, 592–604.

(much less often their sisters') history and achievements, much is known about this issue. Within five years of Isabel's seizure of the Castilian throne in 1474, she and her husband found time – in the latter part of their victorious campaign against their rivals Afonso of Portugal and Juana – to use the special council of Seville to attempt to put some of their religious ideas into practice. At that time a controversy had developed in the Western Catholic Church over the way of life of the religious orders, both male and female. By the 1470s this debate was generally framed in terms of a conflict between 'conventualism' and 'observance.' The former term represented those religious communities (and the orders to which they belonged) which claimed to uphold the practices of their order as they had developed during the centuries since their foundation. This generally meant the acceptance of great wealth in the form of donations of lands and rents by lay benefactors, and – in the case of the larger houses in the Benedictine tradition, the Order of St. Benedict itself, and the Cistercian and Carthusian orders, and also the separate order of canons of St. Augustine – often a laxer style of life, which usually meant what was effectively private accommodation for monks and nuns instead of communal dormitories. The 'observant' movement, on the other hand, which had developed from the 14th century and asserted that 'religious' (meaning monks, nuns, and friars) should not have any property at all, even communally, had spread from Italy to other Western European countries, including Spain. It was particularly strong in the Franciscan orders – male friars and nuns of St. Clare (*Clarisas*) – because their 13th-century founder, St. Francis of Assisi, had enjoined his original brothers to possess nothing and beg for food. In these and other orders, 'observance' represented a strict adherence to their respective founders' 'rule.' However, this kind of reform often bore the further implication of a critique of engagement by the orders in academic work, often in a university context, which was held to offer the temptations of wealth and influence. In Seville in 1478, Isabel and Fernando made it plain that they fully supported the aspirations of the 'observant' movement and were prepared to use whatever influence they had with the pope, as well as their own royal powers, in the cause of this type of reform. Sixtus IV (himself a Franciscan) was unresponsive to their approaches in this respect, but on 11 September 1487 his successor Innocent VIII made a move in their direction. He authorized a committee of Castilian bishops (all supporters of the queen and king) to appoint official 'visitors' on his behalf to investigate the conduct of religious houses in the kingdom of Galicia in northwestern Spain. This did not satisfy Isabel and her husband, however, and they would spend the next two decades in largely unsuccessful attempts to spread such reformed practice throughout their domains.

Some progress was made, however, between 1493 and 1499 during the reign of the Valencian Pope Alexander VI. In 1496 he appointed the future Cardinal Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros and Archbishop Diego de Deza to reform the Spanish provinces of the Franciscan and Dominican orders, respectively; although when Deza was appointed Inquisitor-General in 1502, succeeding Friar Tomás de Torquemada, he was replaced by another Dominican, Bishop Pascual de Ampudia. By the time of Isabel's death, every religious order in Castile and Aragon had been touched by the 'observant' reform which was now officially compulsory.²⁹ This inevitably raises the question of Isabel's understanding of the monastic life, and hence the spiritual currents of the Castilian Church of her day.

The Christianity of the Iberian Peninsula, in the late medieval and early modern periods – unlike that in the rest of Europe – in a sense defined itself against Judaism and Islam because of the continuing presence of both faiths. Spain and Portugal were also unique in that between 1391 and the mid-16th century they experienced the conversion of Jews and Muslims to Catholic Christianity. While there is truth in this, and Isabel and Fernando's Inquisition is a prime example of the importance of these concerns, the issue of monastic practice emphasizes the extent to which Spain also shared in developments elsewhere in the Western Church, notably the concern for 'reform.' Indeed, until quite recently, many historians have accepted the judgement of the great 19th-century historian Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo that Spain did not 'need' the Reformation as it took place in other countries in the 16th century because of the effectiveness of the changes spearheaded by Isabel and Fernando.³⁰ In addition, one cause of inadequacy in much historiography concerned with late medieval Christianity is the abiding faith of many scholars in the view of the great philosopher Miguel de Unamuno, who published a blistering criticism of the spirituality of the period, which has commonly (if somewhat misleadingly) been described as 'mysticism':

The characteristics of Castilian mysticism were the egotistical quietism of losing oneself in the abyss of nothingness or brutal illuminism, given to the idleness and satiation of the instinct, which ended with the

29 John Edwards, *The Spain of the Catholic Monarchs, 1474–1520* (Oxford: 2000), 213–19; Edwards, *Ferdinand and Isabella* (Harlow: 2005), 91.

30 See, for example, Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo, *Historia de los heterodoxos españoles*, 3 vols (Madrid: 1965), 1:46.

horrible combination of denial of the intellect with the emptiness imagined within the carnal union of the sexes.³¹

Clearly Unamuno, like Menéndez Pelayo, saw religion very much as a matter of liturgical ritual and moral and social conduct. But, in this respect, these later cultural critics turned a blind eye to some of the most important religious impulses and outpourings of Isabel and Fernando's reign in which both monarchs fully participated.

In the second half of the 15th century, and well into the 16th, there was a rich vein of interior religion in Spanish Christianity, in which many converted Jews – and, increasingly, some Muslims – participated fully. In the 1520s, Spanish Inquisitors had great difficulty understanding (let alone classifying as heretical or not) such swirls of faith and emotion. Many modern scholars – who often have little or no experience of, let alone sympathy with, religious experience – have suffered similar handicaps. Yet anyone who seriously wishes to know and understand the Christian faith as Isabel knew it cannot avoid confronting a spiritual phenomenon which was especially prominent among her beloved Franciscans. This spiritual Christianity was perhaps best summarized in a *Spiritual ABC*, published two decades after the queen's death by a Franciscan friar of the 'observance,' Francisco de Osuna.³² He favored what he and others called 'recollected' prayer (*recogimiento*), which 'recollects,' or gathers up, human sensuality, inviting the practitioner to subdue the body while at the same time drawing out intrinsic human virtues. The purpose of all this was to bring the Christian to a closer relationship with God.³³ This kind of spirituality must be taken into consideration when an overall assessment of the relationship between Isabel and religion is made.

This is particularly true when it comes to consideration of one the queen's most significant actions: together with her husband, she petitioned Pope Sixtus IV in 1478 for the establishment of an Inquisition in her kingdoms, something which could only be done by the Apostolic See. At the often-mentioned special council of the Church held earlier in the year in Seville, the monarchs had been told that the longstanding doubts in Spanish society about the Christian

31 "Las [características] del misticismo castellano fueron el quietismo egoísta de abismarse en la nada, o el alumbrismo brutal dado a la holganza y al hartazgo del instinto, que acababa en el horrible consorcio del anegamiento del intelecto en el vacío conceptualizado con la unión carnal de los sexos" (Miguel de Unamuno, *En torno al casticismo*, ed. Jean Claude Rabaté [Madrid: 2005], 229).

32 *Tercer abecedario de Francisco de Osuna*, ed. Saturnino López Santidrián (Madrid: 1998).

33 López Santidrián, *Abecedario*, 208–11.

orthodoxy of converts from Judaism (and, increasingly, of their descendants) had reached a kind of crisis. The phenomenon of large-scale conversion – which was unique to Spain and Portugal – had developed after violent attacks on Jewish communities in Spanish towns in the summer of 1391. Over the next generation, thousands of Jews from various social and economic levels had become Catholic Christians. For the more able, this religious change had opened up new opportunities in local government, the universities, and the clergy. By the mid-15th century, the issue had arisen of the true nature of these conversions. In simple terms, had these Jews become sincere Christians, or were they in fact still attached to their former religion? In 1449 a new urban attack occurred in Toledo, but this time it was not on Jews, as before, but on converts (*conversos*), and in particular on those who were farming and collecting royal taxes. Although this violence was repressed, the issue of the conversions came to the top of the political agenda and would remain there throughout the unstable reign of Enrique IV of Castile (1454–74). Thus, it is no surprise that the matter was raised in the Seville church gathering, nor is it surprising that Isabel and Fernando took it up with alacrity just as they were coming to the end of the combined war with Portugal and the Castilian civil war which would secure their throne. Previous popes had authorized limited operations by inquisitors during Enrique's reign, but Sixtus's 1478 bull had the effect of creating a new institution – first in Castile and then in the Crown of Aragon – which would spread its tentacles throughout Spain's dominions in the early modern period and remain in existence until 1834.

In the Middle Ages, an 'inquisition' might investigate a wide range of issues (not necessarily involving religious orthodoxy) and was conducted as a truth-seeking exercise, in the form of systematic questioning – as enshrined in Roman law – by a magistrate or coroner (in secular cases) or an ecclesiastical official, usually a priest and/or friar, in cases concerning religion. Before 1478, specialized inquisitorial tribunals had been set up by the papacy in various European countries, including the Crown of Aragon, but in no previous case had the initiative of the crown been so crucial, even dominant. Although what would become known to history as 'The Spanish Inquisition' always remained at its heart an ecclesiastical institution, the 1478 bull of foundation was, at the time of its issue, original with respect to the wide range of powers that it granted to the Crowns of Castile and Aragon. Traditionally, in all parts of the Western Catholic Church, those accused of heresy had been tried by church courts, and those convicted of relapse into heresy were handed over after trial to the relevant secular authorities, in order for the capital sentence of burning, either in person or in effigy (if they had escaped or had already died), to be carried out. Now, however, authority over the Spanish Inquisitorial tribunals

was effectively placed in the hands of royal servants, since Inquisitors in Spain were henceforward appointed by the crown, although this fact did not prevent either Sixtus IV or Innocent VIII from trying to regain at least some papal power over the defense of Catholic orthodoxy in Spain after they received complaints of abuses from Spanish subjects, especially Christians of Jewish origin (*conversos*). However, the election as pope in 1493 of the Valencian Rodrigo de Borja, who took the name Alexander VI, effectively gave a free hand to Isabel and her husband to control 'their' Inquisition. Spaniards of the period knew all too well that the Inquisition was, to all intents and purposes, an instrument of royal governance.

Also unprecedented was the universal coverage of Spanish territory by the new Inquisition. By the end of Isabel's reign, a network of tribunals existed, staffed by Inquisitors (often friars) who were qualified either in theology or (more commonly) in canon law, as well as notaries, constables, and jailers. These local Inquisitions were commonly based in major towns, but Inquisitors often carried out visitations in the area round about, during which an *edict of grace* or *edict of faith* would be read aloud in parish churches. This document set out the religious teachings and practices – most of them concerned with Judaism – which the Inquisition regarded as heretical. In order to be treated leniently, Christians had to come forward not only to confess their own 'errors' but also those of their neighbors, thus creating a climate of fear and suspicion which would influence Spanish society and damage the reputation of Spain abroad for centuries to come. This is not the place to consider the voluminous records of Inquisition trials and organizational arrangements which survive from Isabel's reign and those of her successors, but some general points should be made nevertheless.

From their beginning in the 13th century, papal inquisitorial tribunals had introduced to European systems of justice the novel principle of long-term imprisonment (as opposed to judgement by ordeal or fines), and the new Spanish tribunals followed this example. In many cases, suspects – who automatically lost their possessions as soon as they were arrested on suspicion of heresy (generally 'Judaizing'), thus threatening to ruin their families as well – were imprisoned for months or even years while under interrogation. These sessions, the surviving records of which show a rigid procedure being followed, might result in the issue of penances and house arrest, as well as exclusion from public office and other positions of trust and honor. On occasion, torture might be used to secure confessions; but equally, if not more effective, in breaking the morale of the accused were long periods of incarceration, often under highly unpleasant conditions. The death penalty by burning alive was reserved for those who had previously been convicted of heresy and then

'relapsed.' It was in these cases that the notorious public 'acts of faith' (*autos de fe*) were held, in which the convicts were paraded through the streets, forced to listen to edifying sermons, and then led away – usually from a main square to the edge of town – to be burned. In these ceremonies the might of the crown was dramatically displayed along with the power of the church. While the procedures of the Holy Office of the Inquisition can thus be described and defined with ease, the questions of what exactly the Inquisition found, and how truthful and accurate its surviving records are, cannot be answered so readily and simply.

The fairly standardized questionnaires (*interrogatorios*) found in the records of Inquisition trials (*procesos*) focus mainly on Jewish beliefs and practices, many of them concerned with domestic life, such as the observance of the Sabbath at home and the holding of private services for worship using Hebrew prayers. The proceedings were, however, very formal, and both accused persons and witnesses were forced to stay within a rigid framework, which was clearly influenced by a Christian approach to Judaism grounded in academic theology. The underlying religious assumption in these records is that the accused were obstinately clinging to a dry, legalistic religion which had been superseded by the coming to earth of Jesus the Messiah. Thus, most of the Inquisitors' questions focused on ritual and ceremony rather than the theological differences between Jews and Christians which had been the subject matter of debates between theologians of the two religions in earlier periods, for example at Tortosa in Catalonia in 1413–14 while large-scale conversions were in progress. Some scholars, most notably Benzion Netanyahu, have regarded these trial records as so deeply flawed that they cannot be used at all as historical sources, with rabbinical rulings (*responsa*) and contemporary chronicles being regarded as more reliable. Historians of other periods and places have correctly noted the problems intrinsic to the documentation of trials in which individuals with limited education met university-trained theologians and lawyers without knowing the rules of the intellectual game. Nevertheless, the answers to questions recorded in these documents do often manifest a certain random quality which – apart from the great linguistic value of these sources in recording (apparently) local forms of vernacular speech – might suggest that these records do have value. The entire enterprise of the Inquisition does, however, raise serious moral questions, including the question of Isabel's responsibility for what happened.

Despite attempts by some historians, notably Henry Kamen, to minimize the cruelty involved in the actions of Spain's Inquisition, it seems more important and relevant to accept the inevitable consequences of long-term imprisonment, the destruction of social reputation, and the painful and dreadful

nature of a death arrived at by burning, normally while the victims were still fully sentient. The question that arises from a serious contemplation of these issues is whether or not moral standards were somehow different in the 15th and 16th centuries from those of today. Such a proposition is hard to accept, let alone justify. What seems to have happened is that religious heresy was regarded as the worst of social threats, not just because of worries (justified or not) about the 'threat' of 'false' converts to the safety of Spanish society, but because, in Isabel's kingdoms – as elsewhere in Europe at the time – such dissidence, whether public or secret, was regarded as a direct and insidious threat to that society as well as to the immortal soul of the person concerned. There can be no doubt that Isabel was, like her husband Fernando, a conventional Christian believer of her time. But that leads to the paradox, from the viewpoint of later centuries, that she regarded the violence involved in the Inquisition's work as necessary, even though there is ample evidence that she could, in other circumstances – such as her care for her own family and her apparently genuine concern for the well-being of her subjects – appear kind and even compassionate. Such a paradox has not only exercised subsequent scholars of her reign, but also the Catholic Church of the 20th century.

Isabel's death on 26 November 1504 ushered in a period of political crisis in Spain in general, and in Castile in particular, which lasted into the early 1520s when her grandson Charles succeeded in suppressing the urban and noble rebellion generally known as the *Comunidades*. Given the fact that the queen's reputation suffered somewhat during this period and was not helped by the succession of the Habsburg and Bourbon dynasties, it is perhaps not surprising that it was not until the beginning of the 20th century that public attempts were made to secure her canonization by the papacy as a saint. The basis for such claims was effectively outlined in 1904 on the 450th anniversary of her death by Zacarías Martínez, Archbishop of Santiago de Compostela:

This woman stands out among all the queens who were not saints, for the virtues of her sanctity, and among all the saints who were queens for the achievements of her reign.³⁴

34 "Esta mujer descuella entre todas las reinas que no fueron santas por las virtudes de su santidad, y entre todas las santas que fueron reinas por las proezas de su reinado" (Edwards, *Isabel la Católica: Poder y fama* [Madrid: 2005], 195–96).

In 1929 a special conference on Isabel's sainthood was held in Seville to coincide with the Ibero-American exhibition.³⁵ Reports of its proceedings in newspapers including *El Debate* and *La Gaceta del Sur* give a clear indication of the arguments being deployed at that time. Isabel was praised for extirpating Muslim rule in Granada, for setting up the Inquisition to 'cleanse' the kingdom of heresy, for expelling Jews who refused to convert to Catholicism, and for initiating the evangelization of the Americas. In addition to these state achievements, she was also praised personally as a model wife and mother who combined government with the domestic arts.³⁶ The period of the Second Republic and the Spanish Civil War (1931–39) saw a lull in proceedings, but a major new effort began in Valladolid in the 1950s and 1960s to assemble a cause for presentation in Rome. As a result of this the archives were trawled and valuable collections of contemporary sources from the reign of Isabel and Fernando were published, which have aided researchers ever since they were edited and printed.³⁷ The rigorous academic work involved in the 'cause' also substantiated doubts about Isabel's achievements, especially in religious matters, which would lead to a backlash. This reactionary response has continued to be successful up to the present day.

Isabel's case reached the Vatican in 1972 at a time of reform and turmoil resulting from the Second Vatican Council. Already in chapter 25 of the "Introduction to the Cause" (*Introducción de la Causa*), likely objections to the canonization of Isabel were mentioned. These included the legitimacy of her succession to the Castilian throne, given that Enrique IV's daughter also claimed the throne and Isabel and her husband had to fight a war against her and Afonso V of Portugal. The second objection raised was to the canonical validity of her marriage to Fernando, given their close relationship. Their marriage had indeed taken place on the basis of a forged papal dispensation of consanguinity which the Archbishop of Toledo at the time, Alfonso Carrillo, conveniently produced at the ceremony in Valladolid in 1468. Even more significantly, the 1972 document directly confronted issues arising from the

35 The Ibero-American exhibition took place in Seville between 9 May 1929 and 21 June 1930. Its purpose was to emphasize brotherhood among Spain, Portugal, and the Americas by reflecting agriculture, trade, and industry. The various national pavilions are still to be seen in the city.

36 Juan G. Atienza, Regina beatissima: *La leyenda negra de Isabel la Católica* (Madrid: 2002), 361; Edwards, *Isabel la Católica*, 196–97.

37 See for example Vicente Rodríguez Valencia (ed.), *Isabel la Católica en la opinión de españoles y extranjeros*, 3 vols (Valladolid: 1970).

foundation of the Castilian Inquisition in 1478 and the expulsion from Spain in 1492 of Jews who refused to convert to Christianity.

As far as the new Holy Office was concerned, the 'cause' asserted that the foundational bull of 1 November 1478 had been issued "by the insistent desire of [Pope] Sixtus IV to conjure away [*sic*] the danger [*sic*] of the false [*sic*] converts."³⁸ In part this was true, but there is no doubt that much of the initiative for the new tribunals came from the queen herself and her husband. Since Isabel's 'cause' rose to prominence during the pontificate of Pope St John Paul II, especially as the 500th anniversary of Christopher Columbus's landing in the Caribbean approached in 1992, it was inevitable that Isabel's advocates would have to confront the issue, at the end of March 1492, of orders for the expulsion from Castile and Aragon of all those kingdoms' Jews who refused to convert to Christianity, causing tens of thousands to leave Spain with little or none of their property. The relevant document referred rather quaintly (and totally inaccurately) to the "withdrawal of permission" (*se retira el permiso*) for Jews to remain where they and their ancestors had lived for centuries, the reason for these measures being, supposedly, "to save the Catholic faith" (*salvar la fe católica*). Remarkably, the document – with little or no regard for the relevant scholarship – asserted that Spain's Jews were "the cause of much social and political disorder," with the result that the expulsion edicts were "the most humane and benevolent [measure] (*sic*) that could be taken in these circumstances."³⁹ Given what is known about Isabel's religious attitudes and policies, it is hard to take such an indulgent view of her actions in this regard, whatever the magnitude of some of her other achievements as a ruler.

38 "[...] por deseo insistente de Sixto IV para conjurar el peligro de los falsos conversos" (Edwards, *Isabel la Católica*, 210–11).

39 "Se retira el permiso de estar en sus reinos [...] [Los judíos eran] la causa de mucho desórden social y politico [...] La medida era la más humana y benévola que se podía tomar en aquellas circunstancias" (*Congregatio pro causis sanctorum officium historicum Vallesoletam Beatificationis et Canonizationis Elizabeth 1 Reginae Castellae in Hispania (1451–1504). Positio super vita, virtutibus et fama sanctitatis ex officio concinnata* [Valladolid: 1990], cited in Alfredo Alvar Esquerra, *Isabel la Católica: Una reina vencedora, una mujer derrotada* [Madrid: 2004], 274–86).

Isabel's Years of Sorrow: Consoling the Catholic Queen

Núria Silleras-Fernández

Which among the Queens of old can you show me who did not either lack the valor to launch great undertakings, the constancy to bring them to a conclusion, or affection for honesty? [...] This woman is stronger than a strong man, more constant than any human soul, a marvelous example of honesty and modesty, such that Nature never made a woman similar [...] [T]hose qualities, so alien to women – as if contradictory – are found in her as both innate and aggrandized.¹



Isabel I (r. 1474–1504), Queen of Castile in her own right, and queen consort of the Crown of Aragon, Sicily, and Naples thanks to her marriage to Fernando II, tended to be described as exceptional by her contemporaries. As this letter from the humanist and chaplain Pedro Mártir de Anglería (1457–1526) states, she was seen as not only the best among all queens, embodying the qualities that other women lacked, but also as even stronger than a “varón fuerte” (“a strong man”). Her uniqueness was expressed in Butlerian terms as gender performed. She was a woman so special that she enjoyed the attributes of men – who were regarded, as a group, as superior to women in medieval society.² In another of his letters, Mártir de Anglería, who developed a particularly pompous style to

1 “¿Cuál me podría mostrar de entre las antiguas (reinas) a quienes no haya faltado o el valor para acometer las grandes empresas o la constancia para llevarlas a cabo o el encanto de la honestidad? [...] Es esta mujer más fuerte que un varón fuerte, más constante que toda alma humana, maravilloso ejemplo de honestidad y pudor, semejante a la cual nunca la Naturaleza hizo otra mujer [...] [A]quellas cualidades ajenas a la mujer – como términos opuestos – se encuentran en ésta como nativas y amplificadas” (Pedro Mártir de Anglería, *Epistolario*, ed. José López de Toro [Madrid: 1953–57], epistle 6 [1502], 20–21).

2 “[G]ender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceed; rather, it is an identity tenuously constituted in time – an identity instituted through a

describe the monarchy, continues in the same line when defining Isabel as the best among all women because, unlike them, she was constant, and had the cardinal virtue of prudence – which is to say, she was wise. Consequently, she resembled the “afamados héroes” – the heroic men of legend:

A woman who was greater than all others, not only emulating man, but with a strength of spirit, prudence, and honesty – this last quality inexistent in women – can take the measure of any one of our most illustrious and famous heroes.³

Isabel took a deliberate hand in creating this image, a self-fashioning as a strong and virtuous monarch who wielded real power but was nevertheless also a devout wife and mother. She played three roles – the reigning queen of Castile and queen consort of Aragon, a wife, and a mother – with apparent grace and ease. Her authority gave her power; but she understood that to exercise it better, she needed the collaboration of her subjects, and therefore, had at the very least to ‘seem’ to respect the patriarchal order.

Her story is well known. In 1469, when she was seen as the most likely successor to her half-brother Enrique IV (r. 1454–1474), she secretly married her cousin Fernando, then King of Sicily, who would become after the death of his father Juan II in 1479 King of the Crown of Aragon. The foundation of their political relationship was the “Concord of Segovia” – an agreement that Isabel and Fernando signed on 15 January 1475 to establish their respective roles in the government of each other’s kingdoms and secure Isabel’s personal sovereignty over Castile. Fernando was in a weak position at the time because of the Catalan Civil War (1462–72) and conflict with France, and therefore acquiesced to an agreement that clearly defined his role in Castile as secondary. For her part, although Isabel was made lieutenant-general of the Crown of Aragon on 14 April 1481, she does not seem to have participated in the politics of that realm like Fernando did in Castile.⁴

stylized repetition of acts” (Judith Butler, “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory,” *Theater Journal* 40.4 [1988]: 519–31, at 519).

3 “Mujer que supera a todas las mujeres, no sólo émula del hombre, sino que en fortaleza de espíritu, en prudencia y en constancia, cualidad esta última que no acontece en mujer, puede parangonarse con cualquiera de los más ilustres y afamados héroes” (Mártir de Anglería, *Epistolario*, 1:185).

4 Antonio de la Torre (ed.), “Isabel la Católica,” in *Documentos sobre relaciones internacionales de los Reyes Católicos* (Barcelona: 1965), 423–28. The original document is at the Archivo General de Simancas, Patronato Real, leg. 21, fol. 1 (n. 2580, catalogue 5). See Emilia Salvador Esteban, “La precaria monarquía hispánica de los Reyes Católicos: Reflexiones sobre la

Having joined forces, between 1474 and 1479 they fought and won a civil war against her half brother Enrique IV's daughter, Juana "la Beltraneja" and her husband Afonso V of Portugal.⁵ It was openly alleged that Juana, who was the natural heir to Castile, was in fact the illegitimate daughter of Enrique's royal favorite, Beltrán de la Cueva – a rumor which provided the justification for Isabel's ascension. With the war of succession concluded, having pacified their kingdoms and subdued the nobility, Isabel and Fernando instituted the Inquisition in 1478 as a means of maintaining religious orthodoxy. A few years later, in 1492, they expelled the Jews who refused to convert to Christianity from the Peninsula, conquered the Nasrid sultanate of Granada, the last Muslim kingdom in Iberia, and sponsored Christopher Columbus's voyage to the Indies. Columbus, as we know, ended up in the Caribbean, launching a brutal process of colonization and evangelization of the New World and laying the foundation for a Spanish Empire "upon which the sun would never set." As a reward for their efforts Pope Alexander VI gave Isabel and Fernando the honorific title of "the Catholic Monarchs" in 1496 – a label that sealed their reputation as zealous Catholics, although this did not necessarily correspond to their historical personas.

During these momentous events – processes that would transform the Iberian Peninsula and change the course of world history – Isabel became a mother. This was one of the key expectations for a queen. Providing legitimate offspring (preferably a male heir) ensured the continuity of the monarchy and its institutions, prevented power struggles amongst the nobility, and reinforced political alliances with neighboring kingdoms. On the other hand, the absence of an heir invited uncertainty, conflict, and war. For their part, Isabel and Fernando raised five children who reached adulthood, including four daughters and a son: Isabel (1470–98), Juan (1478–97), Juana (1479–1555), María (1482–1517), and Catalina (1485–1536). Despite her evident energies, Isabel's supporters presented her as a sort of Virgin Mary, a Queen of Heaven, and saw in Prince Juan's birth a parallel to the incarnation of Christ: a birth that heralded both new life and great hope.⁶

participación de Isabel I en el gobierno aragonés," in *Homenaje a José A. Maravall*, ed. María Carmen Iglesias, Carlos Moya, and Luis Rodríguez Zúñiga, vol. 1 (Madrid: 1985), 315–27.

5 Juana was incarcerated at the convents in Santarem and Coimbra for 30 years, until in 1509 she moved to a palace in Lisbon. See Tarsicio Azcona, *Juana de Castilla, mal llamada la Beltraneja (1462–1530)* (Madrid: 2007), 214, 272.

6 Tarsicio Azcona, *Isabel la Católica: Estudio crítico de su vida y su reinado* (Valladolid: 1993), 396–400; Peggy K. Liss, *Isabel the Queen: Life and Times* (Philadelphia: 2004), 157–61; Barbara Weissberger, *Isabel Rules: Constructing Queenship, Wielding Power* (Minneapolis: 2003), 112–24; Elizabeth Leffeldt, "Ruling Sexuality: The Political Legitimacy of Isabel of Castile,"

This chapter, however, will not focus on Isabel's triumphs, or the hopes and joys that her son and daughters brought to her, but rather on what might be qualified as Isabel's 'years of sorrow.' This period from 1497 to 1504 was the last phase of her thirty-year reign, a time marked by the unexpected deaths of her only son Juan in 1497, her daughter Isabel in 1498, and her grandson Miguel de la Paz – the younger Isabel's son by Manuel I of Portugal – in 1500. Compounding these were more deaths. In 1491, Prince Afonso, the heir of Portugal and the first husband of the younger Isabel, died unexpectedly while riding. In 1496 Isabel's mother, Isabel of Portugal, the dowager of Juan II of Castile, died after a long confinement. The next year Prince Juan's daughter by his wife Margaret of Austria died soon after a premature birth. Finally, in 1502 another son-in-law, Arthur of Wales, the heir to the English throne, died of an illness, leaving Isabel's daughter Catalina (Catherine of Aragon) a widow living in far-off Britain, as she would remain until after her mother's death, when she embarked upon what would be a bitter marriage to Henry VIII.

The deaths of three heirs in rapid succession – Juan, Isabel, and Miguel de la Paz – were poignantly described by her chronicler Andrés Bernáldez (ca. 1450–1513) as “knives of pain” (*cuchillos de dolor*) stabbing the queen's soul:

The first knife of pain that pierced the soul of the lady Queen Isabel was the death of the prince. The second was the death of lady Isabel, her first born daughter, the queen of Portugal. The third knife of pain was the death of master Miguel, her grandson, who had been at that point her consolation. And from that time the said lady Queen Isabel, so greatly necessary to Castile, lived without pleasure, had her health and life cut short.⁷

And so, the last seven years of Isabel's long reign were marked by mourning – a process bound up with a panoply of other emotions: anxiety, shock, guilt, despair, and, of course, melancholy. This period was also defined by declining

Renaissance Quarterly 53.1 (2000): 31–56, at 40–54; Cristina Guardiola-Griffiths, *Legitimizing the Queen: Propaganda and Ideology in the Reign of Isabel I of Castile* (Lewisburg: 2011), 16–23; and Núria Silleras-Fernández, *Chariots of Ladies: Francesc Eiximenis and the Court Culture of Medieval and Early Modern Iberia* (Ithaca: 2015), 151–202.

7 “El primer cuchillo de dolor que traspasó el ánima de la reina doña Isabel fue la muerte del príncipe. El segundo fue la muerte de doña Isabel, su primera hija, reina de Portugal. El tercero cuchillo de dolor fue la muerte de don Miguel, su nieto, que ya con él se consolaban. E desde estos tiempos bivió sin plazer la dicha reina doña Isabel, muy necesaria en Castilla, e se acortó su vida e salut” (Andrés Bernáldez, *Memoria del reinado de los Reyes Católicos*, ed. M. Gómez Moreno and J. de M. Carriazo [Madrid: 1962], 380).

physical health, which prompted her withdrawal from the day-to-day politics of the realm, and by the stresses of her complicated and troubled relationship with her daughter and successor Juana.⁸ For the sake of brevity, this chapter concentrates on the earliest of these events, which also set Isabel's decline in motion: the death of Prince Juan, the son who grew into adulthood and who was supposed to inherit the crown.

Prince Juan's passing – together with the reaction of the queen, the court, and the kingdom, and the voluminous literary production it generated – provides a framework for studying broader questions. Through it we can see what models of self-control were promoted at the time in the royal courts of the Iberian Peninsula. And when we compare it to the death just a few years previously of the young Prince Afonso of Portugal, we can analyze how grief was understood and performed, and how mourning and the expression of emotions were gendered. Specifically, by focusing on emotions this chapter argues that the rituals and texts inspired by the demise of Prince Juan (including, but not limited to, the *Tratado del fallecimiento del príncipe Juan* by the royal chaplain Alonso Ortiz) had as their aim to control grief and promote decorum, to move death away from the public displays of suffering and lamentation that had long been practiced, and to thereby present the mourning Queen Isabel as adhering to the cultural and social expectations that came with her position and to her self-fashioning as “reina y propietaria de Castilla.”

1 Isabel's First Sorrow: The Death of Prince Juan

As Isabel's second child and her only son, Prince Juan, it seemed, was destined to succeed to both the Crown of Castile and the Crown of Aragon. Isabel was 27 years old when he was born in 1478 and 46 when he died in 1497 – at which point she was beyond her reproductive years and incapable of producing another son.⁹ The prince's marriage to Margaret of Austria (1480–1530)

8 José Martínez Millán, “De la muerte del príncipe Juan al fallecimiento de Felipe el Hermoso (1497–1506),” in *La corte de Carlos V*, ed. J. Martínez Millán, vol. 1 (Madrid: 2000), 53; Azcona, *Isabel la Católica*, 713–20, 735–37; Liss, *Isabel*, 378–401; and John Edwards, *Isabel la Católica: Poder y fama* (Madrid: 2004), 220.

9 Several authors have written monographs that explored Prince Juan's life and death: Manuel Gómez Imaz, *Algunas noticias referentes al fallecimiento del Príncipe don Juan y al sepulcro de Fr. Diego Deza, su ayo* (Sevilla: 1890); Gabriel Maura, *El príncipe que murió de amor: Don Juan, primogénito de los Reyes Católicos* (Madrid: 1944); José Camón Aznar, *Sobre la muerte del príncipe don Juan* (Madrid: 1963); Miguel Pérez Priego, *El Príncipe don Juan: Historia y literatura* (Valladolid: 1999); Ángel Alcalá Gálvez and Jacobo Sanz Hermida, *Vida y muerte del príncipe don Juan: Historia y literatura* (Valladolid: 1999); and Louis Cardaillac,

was part of a double marital agreement between Isabel and Fernando and the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian which joined also Juan's sister Juana in marriage to Margaret's brother, Philip of Burgundy. The diplomatic goal of the betrothals was to strengthen the relationship of Castile-Aragon and Burgundy against France.¹⁰ However, only six months after his wedding, Juan (who was not known for his strong constitution) became ill and died. The serious political implications were clear and immediate: the Crowns of Castile and Aragon would be inherited by his sister Isabel, who was by then married to Manuel I of Portugal.¹¹

In this era, it was not so unusual for an heir to die prematurely. In fact, the same thing had happened a generation earlier in both Castile and Aragon. It was the death of Isabel's brother Alfonso (1453–58) that elevated her to the throne, and it was the death of Fernando's brother Carlos of Viana (1421–1461) that paved the way to his succession in Aragon. In Castile, female succession was exceptional but not prohibited. If anything, Prince Juan's death would 'normalize' female rule in the kingdom. With no other male heirs, Isabel would inevitably be succeeded by one of her daughters.

Whether they were rulers in their own right or not, women were certainly involved in government at the time. Medieval queens – even those who were merely queens consort – held considerable power and influence, both through their husbands and through their own networks. This was particularly obvious in the Crown of Aragon (in which queens had regularly been appointed royal lieutenants) as well as in Castile, where several queens served as regents or ruled in their own right.¹² As scholars are well aware now, monarchy in the Middle Ages did not consist merely of the king or ruling queen: it was a collaborative institution in which family members and subordinates – most importantly, the royal consort – played indispensable roles. And so, although Isabel and Fernando's succession remained secure in the form of their four healthy daughters, Juan's death brought uncertainty and undermined their political program in that it reconfigured the future dynastic union and the future balance of power in the Peninsula. It appeared that Castile and Aragon would go

L'Espagne des Rois Catholiques: Le prince don Juan, symbole de l'apogée d'un règne, 1474–1497 (Paris: 2000).

10 Regarding this marital agreement, see Archivo General de Simancas: Patronato Real, legajo 56, doc. 2,1 (20 January 1495).

11 Guimarães Sá, *Rainhas consortes de Manuel I: Isabel de Castela, Maria de Castela e Leonor de Áustria* (Lisbon: 2012).

12 Silleras-Fernández, *Chariots of Ladies*, 111–13; and Núria Silleras-Fernández, *Power, Piety, and Patronage in Late Medieval Queenship: Maria de Luna* (New York: 2008), 1–7.

to Portugal, given that their eldest daughter Isabel was married to Manuel I; although Juana was married to Duke Philip of Burgundy, and she was now second in line. Moreover, Aragon and Castile were not formally united: the union would only continue if both Crowns were inherited by a common heir – that is to say, a child or grandchild of Isabel and Fernando.

The prince's passing required not only a political recalibration, but also an emotional response. Barbara Rosenwein has proposed that medieval societies consisted of a multiplicity of "emotional communities," each with distinctive affective styles, and that individuals learned to adapt to the expectations of each of these in order to be able to move between "church, tavern, and palace."¹³ For his part, William Reddy, writing on early modern France, perceived what he calls "emotional regimes": modes of emotional expression and thought that were prevalent in different temporal and cultural contexts and that contributed to the dissemination and enforcement of dominant social norms. As a consequence of these, people might endure "emotional suffering" if the prevailing regime stifled or restricted their emotions, or might take advantage of "emotional refuges" that provided relief from suffering by offering "safe release from prevailing emotional norms."¹⁴ Using these theoretical propositions as a point of departure, one can imagine the medieval court functioning as an emotional community that promoted fairly precise rules of behavior to determine how sorrow ought to be performed and that simultaneously intersected with gender, social status, and religious affiliation. Thus, in this case, if the court functioned as an "emotional community" or "regime," Isabel I was forced to perform her "emotional suffering" in restrictive ways due to her role as a monarch, as a woman, and as a female monarch. The "emotional refuge," if it existed at all, could only take precisely delimited forms: the ritualization of death that came through organizing a funeral; performing socially sanctioned acts of mourning such as wearing plain black clothes, commissioning requiem masses, giving alms, and praying; or through the medium of religious and consolatory literature. Queen Isabel was well aware of the lack of distinction between the public and the private at court, and of the need to ritualize and accept death as God's will – both of which were ideas repeated in the consolatory literature of the period. Thus, the balance of this chapter will focus on how

13 Barbara Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca: 2006); and Barbara Rosenwein, *Generations of Feelings: A History of Emotions, 600–1700* (Cambridge: 2016), 3–10.

14 William Reddy, *Navigations of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: 2001), 124–29; and Barbara Rosenwein, "Worrying About Emotions in History," *American Historical Review* 107.3 (2002): 821–45, at 842.

grief was understood and performed in the emotional community of the court and in the kingdom, and on how consolatory literature framed the dynamics of grief and emotional release.

2 Performing Grief at the Iberian Court

The expression of grief is culturally conditioned. It has taken a multiplicity of forms that have evolved over time and intersect with other factors including gender, social status, and religion. Grief, as much as gender, is performative and scripted. In the Middle Ages, restraint was considered the appropriate approach to take to grieving; but this was clearly not necessarily observed, given that legislation was passed against overly exuberant displays of sorrow. In fact, Alfonso X's legal code, known as *Las siete partidas*, had a section titled "How mourning for the dead is not beneficial, but injurious."¹⁵ The *Partidas* also prohibited clergy from entering houses from which they heard issuing forth excessive expressions of mourning. At the *Cortes* of Soria in the 1380s, Juan I reinforced Alfonso's regulations by forbidding excessive crying and lamentation, clawing at the skin of the face, and wearing black clothes longer than stipulated in the royal ordinances.¹⁶ The expectation was that survivors would show restraint and recover quickly, demonstrating that they accepted God's will and were taking solace in the immortality of the soul and life eternal.

These various regulations, together with the gradual evolution of ideas about courtesy, gave rise towards the end of the Middle Ages to a ritualization of death that provided mourning with an accepted structure.¹⁷ Scholars see a

15 "Que non tiene pro, et tiene daño, facer duelo por los muertos" (Alfonso x El Sabio, *Las siete partidas* [Barcelona: 1843], ley 42, d. ley XCLX, vol. 1, 223). See also Laura Vivanco, *Death in 15th-Century Castile: Ideologies and Elites* (Woodbridge: 2004), 156.

16 Manuel Colmeiro, *Cortes de los antiguos reinos de León y Castilla*, Reinado de Juan I, http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra-visor/cortes-de-los-antiguos-reinos-de-leon-y-de-castilla--2/html/fefc50d0-82b1-11df-acc7-002185ce6064_99.html#I_55; Felipe Pereda, "The Oblivious Memory of Images: The 'Burial of the Count of Orgaz' and the Mediterranean Afterlife of the Ancient Lament," *Codex Aquilarensis* 34 (2018): 229–62, at 230–31.

17 Thomas Walter Laqueur, *The Work of the Death: A Cultural History of Mortal Remains* (Princeton: 2015), 1–26; James Amelang, "Mourning Becomes Eclectic: Ritual Lament and the Problem of Continuity," *Past & Present* 187 (2005): 3–31, at 20; James Amelang, "La viuda alegre: Miedo y luto en el lamento ritual," in *Accidentes del alma: Las emociones en la Edad Moderna*, ed. Maria Tausiet and James Amelang (Madrid: 2009): 203–28, at 216; David Nogales Rincón, "Duelo, luto y comunicación política en la Castilla Trastámara," *Edad Media. Revista de Historia* 17 (2016): 327–50, at 347; Carole Lansing, *Passion and Order: Restraint of Grief in the Medieval Italian Communes* (Ithaca: 2008), 58–72; and

change of attitude towards death in Europe occurring more or less between the mid-15th and the early 17th centuries. In the Iberian Peninsula the watershed moments were 1491 and 1497, marked by the deaths of the two princes, Afonso of Portugal and Juan of Aragon / Castile.¹⁸ For Philippe Ariès, mourning in the early modern period served two main purposes: it allowed the family of the deceased an opportunity to express their grief; and the rituals associated with it protected them from descending into debilitating sorrow, thanks also to a communal effort from relatives, neighbors, and friends that contributed to their recovery.¹⁹ Furthermore, Ernesto de Martino has emphasized that cultures develop highly scripted rituals of bereavement; following these prescribed steps helps survivors to recover. We see this in the establishment of black as the color *de rigueur* of mourning at this time. This fashion began in royal courts in the 15th and 16th centuries, by which time it became customary also to set aside a period of two or more weeks of *recogimiento* – a period aimed at ‘putting oneself back together.’ This was often taken in the form of a spiritual retreat which allowed nobles and courtiers a legitimate excuse to absent themselves from the public sphere until such a time as they had regained their emotional equilibrium.²⁰

Given her station, the challenges for Isabel to manage her emotional distress while seeing to her duties as monarch were considerable. As queen she needed to serve as an example for her subjects; first and foremost, she was expected to govern her emotions. As a female ruler, she needed to be careful not to be seen as behaving in a way that was too ‘feminine’ – which is to say, she could not let her emotions take control of her royal persona or appear irrational. Throughout her reign Isabel took this duty to heart: even in the *extremis* of childbirth – which for a queen was a ‘public’ act – she was careful about

Carole Lansing, “Gender and Civic Authority: Sexual Control in a Medieval Italian Town,” *Journal of Social History* 31 (1997): 33–59.

18 Alberto Tenenti, “*Ars moriendi*: Quelques notes sur le problème de la mort à la fin du xv^e siècle,” *Annales* 6.4 (1951): 433–46, at 433–34; Roger Chartier, “Les arts de mourir, 1450–1600,” *Annales* 31.1 (1976): 51–75, at 51. For Portugal see Pereira Lopes, “Confortando reis e rainhas,” 7.

19 Philippe Ariès, *Western Attitudes Towards Death: From the Middle Ages to the Present* (Baltimore: 1979), 66.

20 There are many examples of *recogimiento* such as the weeks that Felipe II spent in a monastery to recover from the death of his first wife María Manuela, who died in childbirth in 1545; or João III and Catalina of Portugal’s *recogimiento* in 1530 as a sign of respect after the death of Juana of Castile “la Beltraneja,” who was known in Portugal as the “Excelente señora” (“Excellent Lady”) (Azcona, *Juana de Castilla*, 463).

concealing her pain.²¹ As Sarah Ahmed has shown, the identification of emotions (which are seen as irrational) with women is a historical phenomenon that has continued to the present:

To be emotional is to have one's judgment affected: it is to be reactive rather than active, dependent rather than autonomous [...] Emotions are associated with women, who are represented as "closer" to nature, ruled by appetite, and less able to transcend the body through thought, will, and judgement.²²

Isabel had two precedents from within her close family circle to serve as a warning against lapsing into intense public grief. Both her mother and her eldest daughter Isabel fell into the grip of extreme bereavement and saw their reputations decline.²³ According to contemporaries, Isabel's mother, Isabel of Portugal, had been unable to recover from the death of her husband, Juan II of Castile (1406–1454). So deep was her grief that she would spend the remaining 42 years of her life in exile from the court in her castle at Arévalo. As Fernando del Pulgar, Isabel and Fernando's chronicler, bluntly recounts:

With the king, lord Juan, having died, the queen, lady Isabel, his wife, felt such great pain at the death of her husband that she fell into a sickness so grave and long that she was never able to recover.²⁴

It is difficult to determine the real nature of Isabel of Portugal's crisis or its duration, and to what extent it was her own decision to retreat into a quiet and independent life away from the court. She has sometimes been presented as a familial precedent for her granddaughter, Juana I of Castile. Juana, known popularly as "the Mad," was deprived of her status as ruling queen of Castile

21 Having witnesses when the queen gave birth was necessary to squelch any rumors that might arise regarding the birth and legitimacy of a royal child. The royal chroniclers Fernando del Pulgar and Lucio Marineo Siculo both mentioned the crowd present while Isabel was giving birth. See Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada, "Isabel la Católica vista por sus contemporáneos," *En la Edad Media* 29 (2006): 225–86, at 234–35.

22 Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotions* (New York: 2015), 2–3.

23 See my monograph in progress *The Politics of Emotion: Love, Grief, and Madness in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia*.

24 "Muerto el Rey Don Juan, la Reyna doña Isabel, su muger, madre desta princesa, sintió tan grande dolor por la muerte de su marido, que cayó en enfermedad tan grave y larga que nunca pudo convalecer" (Hernando del Pulgar, *Crónica de los Señores Reyes Católicos, Don Fernando e Doña Isabel* [Valencia: 1780], 2).

and endured 46 years of lockdown in her palace at Tordesillas, in part as a consequence of her inability to recover from the death of her husband, Philip the Handsome. But while Juana has been the subject of much scholarly and popular scrutiny, Isabel I's eldest daughter Isabel, Princess of Asturias, has not received much historiographical consideration, despite the fact that she underwent a similarly intense period of grief. In her case it came after her first husband, Prince Afonso of Portugal, died in a riding accident in 1491 after only seven months of marriage.²⁵ The youngest Isabel is reported in various contemporary sources as suffering from profound grief, resembling what present-day psychologists refer to as "complicated grief" – a condition which is at times a precursor to major depression.²⁶ For example, the poet and secretary to João II, Garcia de Resende (1470–1536), recounted: "And the princess sheared off her beautiful locks and dressed in robes of mourning with her head covered with a black veil."²⁷ However, it bears noting that she was not the only one who cut off her hair and put on mourning clothes: Afonso's father João II did the same, as did many noblemen.²⁸ Afonso was an only child; thus, his death heralded the extinction of João II's line and threatened the kingdom with crisis. Resende graphically recalled the sadness and desperation that gripped the court:

And with this there was raised before everyone a very great, and very sad, and unfortunate howling, and everyone was striking themselves, wrenching out many noble beards and hair, and the women tearing at the beauty

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- 25 Paulo Drumond Braga, *O Príncipe D. Afonso, filho de D. João II: uma vida entre guerra e paz* (Lisbon: 2008), 69; Rui de Pina, *Crónica de D. João II* in *Collecção de livros ineditos de historia portugueza, dos reinados de D. Joaõ I, D. Duarte, D. Affonso V, e D. Joaõ*, ed. José Francisco Correa da Serra (Lisbon: 1792–1824), 967; and Garcia de Resende, *Cronica de D. João*, in *Collecção de livros ineditos de historia portugueza, dos reinados de D. Joaõ I, D. Duarte, D. Affonso V, e D. Joaõ II*, ed. José Francisco Correa da Serra (Lisbon: 1792–1824), 151.
- 26 Leslie Abend Callahan, "The Widow's Tears: The Pedagogy of Grief in Medieval France and the Image of the Grieving Widow," in *Constructions of Widowhood and Virginity in the Middle Ages* (New York: 1999): 245–65, at 263; Garcia de Resende, *Crónica de D. João II*, 204–05; and Mardi J. Horowitz et al., "Diagnostic Criteria for Complicated Grief Disorder," *Focus* 1.3 (2003): 290–98.
- 27 "E a princesa trosquiou os seus prezados cabellos e se vestio toda d'almafegua e a cabeça cuberta de negro vaso" (Garcia de Resende, *Vida e feitos de João II*, in *Collecção de livros ineditos*, 198).
- 28 "em todo o Reino não ficou senhor, nem pessoa principal, nem homem conhecido que se não tosquiasse" (Resende, *Cronica de D. João II*, 199–200). See also Pereira Lopes, "Confortando reis e rainhas," 12–13.

of their faces with their hands and their nails until the blood ran, a turn of events so shocking and sad that nothing similar has been seen.²⁹

João II was so concerned about the health of his wife and daughter-in-law that he forbade them to attend the lavish funeral held for Afonso at the Monastery of Batalha on 25 August.³⁰ As Resende noted: "For truly, I can affirm these two things: that never was there seen such a grand celebration, nor such abhorrence."³¹ But Princess Isabel could not escape her sorrow. Having returned to Castile, the young widow continued to mourn and made it clear that she had no intention or desire to remarry. However, royal marriages are affairs of the state, not the heart; and eventually in 1497 she was pressured into marrying Manuel I, a cousin and brother-in-law of João, who had inherited the Portuguese throne in 1495.³²

While Prince Juan's death was a source of great despair in his kingdoms, it did not provoke the same excessive display of grief at court as Afonso's had done in Portugal. Juan died in Salamanca on October 4 in the presence of his father, who the following day recounted the sad event in a letter to the Constable of Castile, displaying what would have been regarded as appropriate Christian restraint:

[Juan, who] gave his soul to Our Lord with such devotion and such deliberation and with such prudence and in so Catholic a manner, that with the aid of his mercy, he took refuge in his piety and His holy Glory. Knowing that great thanks have been given to Him for all of this, I am setting out on the road that the queen must have taken, because it is clear that it is right that I ought to be with her at this time.³³

29 "E com ysto se levantou ante todos hum muyto grande, muyto triste e deventurado pranto, dando todos em si muytas bofetadas, depenando muitas e muy honradas barbas e cabellos, e as molheres desfazendo com suas unhas e mãos a fermosura seus rostros que lhe corriam em sangue, cousa tam espantosa e triste que se nam vio nem cuydou" (Resende, *Vida e feitos de João II*, 194).

30 Rui da Pina, *Chronica de João II*, 989; Garcia de Resende, *Cronica de D. João*, 202.

31 "E verdaderamente estas duas cosas se podem afirmar, que nunca viram tam grandes festas, nem tamanho nojo" (Garcia de Resende, *Cronica de D. João*, 202–04). See also Rui da Pina, *Chronica de João II*, 989–90; and Drumond Braga, *O Príncipe D. Afonso*, 104.

32 Mártir de Anglería noted that the princess was fasting and avoiding good foods (Mártir de Anglería, *Epistolario*, epístola 171 [5 December 1496]); see also Ángel Rodríguez Sánchez, "La muerte del Príncipe de Asturias, Señor de Salamanca," *Revista de estudios extremeños* 57.1 (2001): 23–48, at 26.

33 "El qual dio su anima a nuestro Señor con tanta deboçión y tanto conoçimiento suyo e tan católica e cuerdamente que, mediante su misericordia, confió en su piedad questa en su santa Gloria. Séanle dadas muchas gracias por todo, y yo me parto a la ora a la vía del

For his part, the chronicler Andrés Bernáldez recounted how Fernando consoled his own son as he lay dying, so he could let go of the world in peace:

Much beloved son, have patience, then, that God is calling you, He who is the king greater than any other, and who has other kingdoms and lordships greater and better than this that you had and that you looked forward to having, which he will pass on to you and which will endure forever after. So have the courage to face death, which is powerful and each of us must receive once, with the hope to be immortal and live in glory forever.³⁴

Isabel herself was not present; she was accompanying her widowed daughter, Isabel, who was on the way to wed Manuel I of Portugal. As the 16th-century chronicler Zurita put it, this new union, which should have been the cause of great joy, was celebrated “without any show of happiness [...] due to the sudden death of the prince.”³⁵

The deceased Juan was provisionally interred at the Cathedral of Salamanca, but on 2 November his body was transferred to the Monastery of Santo Tomás el Real in Ávila where years later a monumental tomb was constructed by Domenico Fancelli.³⁶ Mártir de Anglería recalled that all of Spain was plunged into mourning, while Zurita noted how unusual the intensity of lamentation was: “These masses and rites were more filled with pain and sadness than any previously in Spain, and more so than for any prince or king.”³⁷ The diet

camino que ha de traer la Reyna, porque para semejante nueva me paresce ques razón hallarme con ella” (letter quoted in Azcona, *Isabel la Católica*, 878).

34 “Hijo mucho amado, aved paciencia pues que Dios os llama, que es el mayor rey que ninguno otro, e tiene otros reinos e señoríos mayores e mejores que no este que vós teniades e esperávades, par vos dar, que vos durarán para siempre jamás. E tened coraçon para recibir la muerte, que es forçoso a cada uno recibirla una vez, con esperança ques para siempre a ser inmortal e vivir en gloria” (Bernáldez, *Memoria*, 379).

35 “sin ninguna demostración de alegría [...] por la arrebatada muerte del Príncipe” (Jerónimo Zurita, *Historia del Rey Don Hernando el Cathólico: De las empresas de Italia* [Zaragoza: 1580], 118).

36 Margarita Cabrera Sánchez, “La muerte del príncipe don Juan: Exequias y duelo en Córdoba y Sevilla durante el otoño de 1497,” *Espacio, tiempo y forma* 31 (2018): 107–33, at 115; Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, *Batallas y Quinquagenas*, ed. J. Pérez de Tudela y Bueso (Madrid: 2000), 3:340. Masses were also sung in his memory after his burial. For instance, in 1500 the *contadores mayores* paid 26,000 *maravadies* to the Monastery of Santo Tomás of Ávila for requiem masses to be celebrated that year. See Archivo General de Simancas: Cámara de Castilla, Ced. 4,38,5 (Seville, 20 March 1500).

37 Mártir de Anglería, *Epistolario*, 9:346. Zurita confirms: “Fueron las honras y obsequias las más llenas de duelo y tristeza que nunca antes en España se entendiesse auerse hecho por Príncipe ni Rey ninguno” (Zurita, *Historia del Rey Don Hernando*, 119).

of the Generalitat of Catalonia, which specified that Juan died of the "peste" (plague) – a fact that is not noted in other sources – echoed these reports: "It pleased Our Lord God, all praise to Him, to have gathered him to His Holy Glory, and given consolation to the most serene king and queen, our lords, and to all the land, paralyzed and wounded by such a great loss."³⁸ Memorial masses for the prince were celebrated through the cities and towns of all the kingdoms. In Córdoba, for example, the cathedral was illuminated with more than 200 candles, almost double the number that were later lit to honor Isabel I's demise.³⁹ In addition, a decorated catafalque was set up in Juan's commemoration for a funeral service that was very well attended by a broad and numerous public, all decked out in clothes of mourning.⁴⁰ In Córdoba the councilors were obliged to wear coarse cloth (*jerga*), and they went so far as to forbid anyone to wear silk, adornments, and bright colors (like red, purple, or yellow) for an entire year. For nine days after the ban, the women of the city were obliged to cover their heads with black scarves (*tocas negras*).⁴¹ Similar public displays of sorrow were customary through the Catholic Kings' lands. In Ávila mourning clothes were required on the grounds that "it is proper that all show their pain and emotions for the loss of their prince and lord."⁴² By contrast, as Mártir de Anglería's testimony bears out, Fernando and Isabel concealed their pain and sadness, putting up a front of strength and steadfastness:

The monarchs made efforts to disguise their great sadness, but we could discern that inside their spirits were broken. When they were in public, they did not cease to gaze into each other's eyes face to face, where one can see what one has hidden inside.⁴³

38 "Plàcie a Nostre Senyor Déu, tot piadós, lo hage col·locat en la sua sancta glòria e do consolació als sereníssims rey e reyna, nostres senyors, e a tota la terra, remey e repòs de tanta pèrdua" (*Dietaris de la Generalitat de Catalunya 1411–1714* [Barcelona: 1994], 1:290). The entry is from 12 October 1497, only eight days after the prince's death.

39 Cabrera Sánchez, "La muerte del Príncipe Don Juan," 119.

40 Cabrera Sánchez, "La muerte del Príncipe Don Juan," 119–20; José Manuel Nieto Soria, *Ceremonias de la realeza: Propaganda y legitimación en la Castilla Trastámara* (Madrid: 1993), 191.

41 Cabrera Sánchez, "La muerte del Príncipe Don Juan," 120.

42 "es razón que todos muestren sentymiento e dolor, por la pérdida de su príncipe e señor" (Rodríguez Sánchez, "La muerte del príncipe," 23).

43 "Los reyes se esfuerzan en disimular su profunda tristeza, pero nosotros adivinamos en su interior derrumbado el espíritu. Cuando están sentados en público, no dejan de fijar continuamente los ojos el uno en el rostro del otro, por donde se pone al descubierto lo que dentro se esconde" (Mártir de Anglería, *Epistolario*, 1:347).

Indeed, the funerary rites and rituals that accompanied the death of Juan were more elaborate and expensive than those for either of his parents would be. When Isabel and Fernando died (in 1504 and 1516 respectively) their wills specified that his subjects were not to wear coarse cloth or other mourning attire, nor to cover their heads or faces.⁴⁴

Thus, the deaths of Afonso and Juan each brought sorrow to their kingdoms and despair to their families, and each precipitated a recalibration of the internal and external politics of their realms. Yet the reaction of the two courts was different. As contemporary witnesses attest, the Portuguese exhibited a great degree of public emotional distress, whereas in Castile efforts were made to control the emotional reaction. Ritual (religious and secular/ceremonial), literary memorialization, and the public mandating of mourning attire served as catalysts for the acceptance of God's will, as the consolatory literature recommended.⁴⁵ In other words, while the Portuguese court reflected the deeply rooted tradition of ritual lamentation of the classical Mediterranean – a tradition that involves a dramatic and public physical response to death, including striking one's face and pulling out or cutting off one's hair or beard – Castilian courtly society had already abandoned such extremes.⁴⁶

3 Consoling the Catholic Queen

Measures taken to mark the period of bereavement included the wearing of mourning clothes, frequent prayer, the giving of alms, and the suspension of

44 Isabel stated: "E quiero e mando que ninguno vista xerga por mi e que en las obsequias que se fezieren por mi donde mi cuerpo estovier, las hagan llanamente sin demasias" (Antonio de la Torre y del Cerro, *Testamentaria de Isabel la Católica* [Barcelona: 1974], 63). Regarding Fernando: "e senyaladamente queremos y ordenamos y mandamos que por nos no se trayga xerga alguna ni luto sobre la cabeça ni barba [...]" (Madrigalejo, January 22, 1516). See the last will and testament in José Manuel Calderón Ortega, *El proceso de redacción del último testamento de Fernando el Católico el 22 de enero de 1516* (Zaragoza: 2016), 47; see also Nieto Soria, *Orígenes de la monarquía hispánica: propaganda y legitimación* (ca. 1400–1520) (Madrid: 1999), 56.

45 There was also consolatory and commemorative literature written after the death of Prince Afonso: for instance, poetry in Portuguese by João Manuel, Luís Anríquez, Álvaro de Brito, and Garcia Resende; and poetry in Spanish by Nicolás Guevara, Juan del Encina, and Ambrosio de Montesinos. To Princess Isabel were dedicated two consolatory treatises: Alonso Ortiz's *Tratado consolatorio a la princesa de Portugal* (Treaty to bring consolation to the Princess of Portugal) (1493) and Andrés de Li's *Summa de paciencia* (Compendium on patience).

46 Pereda, "The Oblivious Memory," 240–56; Amelang, "Mourning Becomes Eclectic," 16–24.

courtly activities associated with entertainment and diversion; even masses were to be said rather than sung. Beyond this, further solace could be sought in reading. The goal of consolatory literature – the genre aimed at helping people move beyond the pain of loss – was to help them recover by encouraging them to set aside the material world and the transitory joys of fame and wealth, all of which paled in comparison with the eternal bliss of the Christian afterlife. It stressed forbearance and resilience, holding up biblical figures like Job as paragons of faith. Having lost his wealth and suffering a series of worldly tragedies, Job nevertheless kept his faith, and consequently was rewarded many times over. Robin Waugh defines “patience literature” as “a genre that features and praises, explicitly or implicitly, the ‘ability to endure,’ to keep on being the same person despite oppressive suffering” and which reflects a “constantly evolving body of conventions that are continually both promoted and undercut in the existing literature.”⁴⁷

Christians were expected to prepare for death by following the teachings of the Church: avoiding sin, performing good works, and taking part in the sacraments. The *Tractatus artis bene moriendi* (The treatise on the art of dying properly) and the *Ars moriendi* (The art of dying), a shorter version based on the second chapter of the *Tractatus*, were popular Latin manuals written at the beginning of the 15th century to teach Christian believers how to meet their end.⁴⁸ They followed the example of the French theologian Jean Gerson (d. 1429) who wrote *La science de bien mourir* (translated from French to Latin as *De scientia mortis*, 1400–1404). Dying well was seen as an aspect of living well, and it became a popular topic in the aftermath of the Black Death and the wars and epidemics that followed it, as the hundreds of manuscripts and early printed editions of the *Ars moriendi* preserved in several languages (Latin, German, Dutch, Italian, French, Castilian/Spanish, and Catalan) attest.⁴⁹ These texts helped those coping with death, which was no longer met by acceptance as a welcome relief from mortal suffering by the end of the Middle Ages and into the early modern period. Death was now something to be dreaded, as the

47 Robin Waugh, *The Genre of Medieval Patience Literature: Development, Duplication, and Gender* (New York: 2012), 7–8.

48 Tomás González Rolán, J.M. Baños, and P. Saquero Suárez-Somonte (eds.), *El humanismo cristiano en la corte de los Reyes Católicos: Las consolatorias latinas a la muerte del Príncipe Juan de Diego de Muros, Bernardino López de Carvajal-García de Bovadilla, Diego Ramírez de Villaescusa y Alfonso Ortiz* (Madrid: 2006), 30; Mary Catherine O'Connor, *The Art of Dying Well: The Development of the Ars Moriendi* (New York: 1942).

49 González Rolán et al. (eds), *Ars moriendi*, 23; Chartier, “Les arts de mourir.”

shift towards gruesome and anatomically correct representations of death in visual culture also shows.

People saw time as limited, and death as certain; organizing oneself by writing a will, giving donations, and preparing the soul for its transit to eternity was seen as essential. In this regard it seems that Isabel had already started thinking about her own death at least since 1487. It was in that year, when Isabel was visiting Fernando as he laid siege to Vélez-Málaga, that a Muslim nobleman who had pretended to join the side of Castile nearly assassinated the couple in their tent.⁵⁰ A few years later, on 7 December 1492 a peasant named Joan de Canyamars – who was described as “crazy” in contemporary accounts – attacked and injured the king.⁵¹ A few weeks later, on 30 December, while still in Barcelona, a worried Isabel wrote to her confessor Hernando de Talavera, reflecting on what had happened and on the need to be always ready for death: “So we see that monarchs can die from whatever misfortune just like others: good reason to prepare oneself to die well [...]”⁵² Acutely aware of her impending death, the queen added: “[...] there is a very great difference between believing it and thinking it, and accepting it.”⁵³ This second assassination attempt prompted her to begin preparing for the inevitable, so the queen asked her confessor to start paying off all her outstanding debts. Isabel seems to have embraced church teachings that were unequivocal regarding death: only the soul is immortal; only the physical body dies.

The genre of consolatory literature, following the tradition of Boethius's *De consolacione philosophiae* (ca. 524), was embraced and further developed by Iberian authors in both verse and prose. The first *consolatio mortis* composed in Spanish that followed its classical antecedents closely was the *Tratado de la consolación*, written by Enrique de Villena (d. 1434) at the request of Juan Fernández de Valera, a scribe in his household who had lost his family due to the plague.⁵⁴ Villena can thereby be considered a precursor of a literary genre that became very popular in Castile, in part as a result of Prince Juan's premature demise, but that had already gained momentum following the death of Afonso of Portugal.

50 José Enrique López de Coca Castañer, *Historia de un magnicidio frustrado* (Málaga: 2008), 14.

51 Teresa Jiménez Calvente, “Fernando el Católico ante la muerte: El atentado de Barcelona y sus relatores,” *Anuario de historia de la Iglesia* 26 (2017): 107–40, at 131–32.

52 “Pues vemos que los Reyes pueden morir de cualquier desastre como los otros, razón es de aparejar para el bien morir [...]” (letter in *Biblioteca selecta de literatura española o modelos de elocuencia y poesía*, ed. P. Mendibil and M. Silvela, vol. 2 [Burdeos: 1819], 18).

53 “hay muy gran diferencia de creerlo y pensarlo, a gustarlo” (in Mendibil and Silvela, *Biblioteca selecta*, 2:18).

54 See Carr's prologue to Enrique de Villena, *Tratado de la consolación*, in Enrique de Villena, *Tratado de la consolación*, ed. Derek Carr (Madrid: 1976), LXXVII.

The popularity of the genre can be seen in the *romance* or ballad "The Death of Prince Don Juan."⁵⁵ Likely composed shortly after the event, it is preserved in 46 oral and 450 written versions in Spanish, Judezmo, Galician, and Portuguese.⁵⁶ Contemporary poets including Garci Sánchez de Badajoz, Juan del Encina, and the Comendador Román also composed verses to commemorate Juan with titles such as *Tragedia trobada*, *Triste España sin ventura*, *A tal pérdida tan triste*, and *Sobre el fallecimiento del príncipe Juan*.⁵⁷ Other works were written in prose, including the consolatory epistles that Cardinal Bernardo de Carvajal and Fray Íñigo de Mendoza wrote to the monarchs.⁵⁸ Fray Íñigo's letters are particularly interesting: he penned a very short one to Fernando, to whom he did not dare to write more because "great sufferings prefer brief reminders" (*los dolores largos quieren las cosas breves*), and a longer letter to Isabel. Clearly the queen found solace in this sort of communication, given that she had recriminated the friar earlier for not writing to her after the loss of her children: "your Highness was asking why I had not written you in your anguish at these events."⁵⁹ Fray Íñigo comforted Isabel by reminding her that the children were not hers, but had been borrowed from God (*Dios nos los presta*). God had given them to her, and it was God's right to claim them back. In any case, he continued, it was not for the queen to question God's motives, for He "cannot do anything that is not good."⁶⁰ The friar is clear: Isabel had received many mercies from God, and now she was being punished. This required her to reflect on her past and present offenses against God. It was a

55 "Muerte del príncipe don Juan."

56 Prince Afonso's ballad "Muerte del príncipe de Portugal" was not as popular as Juan's. There is a longer version written by Fray Antonio de Montesinos at the command of Princess Isabel that seems to be the original version of the ballad. See Clara Marías Martínez, "Historia y ficción en el romance de la 'Muerte del príncipe don Juan': De la princesa Margarita a las viudas de la tradición oral," in *Literatura y ficción: 'Estorias,' aventuras y poesía en la Edad Media*, vol. 2, ed. Marta Haro Cortés (Valencia: 2015), 643–69, at 643–46; Diego Catalán, "Permanencia de motivos y apertura de significados: Muerte del Príncipe don Juan," *Arte poética del romancero oral*, parte 2: *Memoria, invención, arteficio* (Madrid: 1981), 35–107, at 35–37; and Ramón Menéndez Pidal, "El romancero en la corte castellana, 1460–1515," in *Romancero hispánico (hispano-portugués, americano y sefardí): Teoría e historia*, vol. 2 (Madrid: 1968), 291–305.

57 Brian Dutton, *Cancionero del siglo xv* (Salamanca: 1991).

58 Carvajal's contribution was written on 1 December 1497 in Castilian and was translated into Latin by García de Bovadilla ca. 1500 (González Rolán et al. [eds], *El humanismo cristiano en la corte de los Reyes Católicos* [Madrid: 2005], 260).

59 "preguntaua vuestra Alteza el porque en angustias de casos tan graves no le escribía" (Alejandro Amaro, "Dos cartas de Fr. Íñigo de Mendoza a los Reyes Católicos," *Archivo Ibero-americano* 7 [1917]: 459–63, at 460).

60 "no puede hacer cosa que no sea bien fecha" (Amaro, "Dos cartas," 461).

common approach for clergymen and confessors to remind even rulers that God was above them.

Two further works, also by clerics, merit consideration: Diego Ramírez de Haro y Villaescusa's *Dialogui quattuor super auspicato hispaniarum principis emortuali die* (Antwerp: 1498), and Alonso Ortiz's *Tratado del fallecimiento del muy ínclito Señor Don Juan*.⁶¹ These treatises present Isabel and other members of the royal family as literary characters engaging in imagined dialogues.⁶² Villaescusa's text is divided into four such conversations: Isabel speaking with Death, Fernando speaking with Margaret of Austria, Isabel speaking with Fernando, and the royal couple speaking with their daughter-in-law.⁶³ The third dialogue is defined as "consolatory" by the author and is presented not only as a sort of philosophical and religious consolation, but also as a recommendation for practical advice on government. In the dialogue Fernando lectures his wife on the matter of death, while Isabel is presented not merely as the mother of her own children, but also as the mother of her people:

Your people have taken you as their mother. Therefore, behave like their true mother, and not a stepmother. Treat your subjects as if they were your real children, and not your adopted children.⁶⁴

But it is Alonso Ortiz (d. 1503) who arguably wrote the most daring text in response to the death of the prince.

4 Queen Isabel in Alonso Ortiz's Treatise

Ortiz, a noted humanist and polymath who served as royal chaplain and a canon of Toledo, saw in Prince Juan's death a new opportunity to console the queen. However, rather than write to her directly, he dedicated his *Tratado del fallecimiento del muy ínclito Señor Don Juan* to her confessor and confidant,

61 See a study and edition of the consolatory texts written in Latin after the passing of Prince Juan by Diego de Muros, Bernardino López de Carvajal-García de Bovadilla, Diego Ramírez de Villaescusa, and Alfonso Ortiz in González Rolán et al., *El humanismo cristiano*.

62 Jacobo Sanz Hermida, "Literatura consolatoria en torno a la muerte del Príncipe Don Juan," *Studia Histórica-Historia Medieval* 11 (1993): 157–70, at 166.

63 Diego Ramírez de Haro y Villaescusa, *Cuatro diálogos que tratan sobre el infausto día en que murió el Príncipe don Juan*, facsimile edition and translation (Jaen: 1997), 81.

64 "Matrem populi acceperunt: esto illis mater non noverca. Fillii tibi sint non pingui" (Ramírez de Haro, *Cuatro diálogos*, 307).

the enormously powerful Cardinal Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros, Archbishop of Toledo and Chancellor of Castile, whom Ortiz was also cultivating as a patron.⁶⁵ In order to broaden the circulation and appeal of the book, he composed it in Latin but immediately translated it to Castilian. By this point he had mastered the genre of dispensing advice to rulers, having written six other texts for various members of the royal family, most of which were to be found in Isabel's private library.⁶⁶ Ortiz understood that monarchy functioned as a collective family enterprise. Therefore, he wrote not only to the queen and king directly, but also to her two most likely heirs, Juan and Isabel. In 1493, for example, he had published the *Tratado consolatorio a la princesa de Portugal* (The treatise to console the Princess of Portugal) in order to help the young dowager recover from the loss of her husband, Afonso of Portugal. Although the tract was dedicated to the princess, it included an epistolary prologue addressed to her mother in which he implored her to ensure that the treatise reached her afflicted daughter. Ortiz offered the widow hope, assuring her that although "sudden sorrow deprives one of reason ... with time it recovers its strength bit by bit."⁶⁷ Be patient and trust in God, he advised, outlining three paths towards consolation: the sensible, the intellectual, and (the most preferable) the spiritual path.

Another of his works, the *Liber de educatione*, takes the form of a fictional dialogue between Queen Isabel and Cardinal Mendoza (d. 1495), the warrior, statesmen, and cleric whose steadfast and early support of the queen was rewarded with the archbishopric of Toledo. Here Ortiz has the prelate expounding to Isabel on how to educate her son properly while she asks

65 Jacobo Sanz Hermida advocates for Diego de Deza, Bishop of Salamanca and Juan's *ayo* as dedicatee. See his introduction to Ortiz's *Tratado del fallecimiento del muy inclito señor Don Juan* (Ávila: 2000), 26–27.

66 Ortiz wrote *Tratado de la herida del rey* (Treaty of the wound of the king), *Oración a los reyes en latín y en romance* (Prayer to the kings in the Latin and Romance language), *Dos cartas mensajeras a los reyes* (Two missive letters to the monarchs), and *Tratado de la carta contra el protonotario de Lucena* (Treaty of the letter against the notary Lucena). These four texts, along with the consolatory treatise he wrote for Princess Isabel, first circulated in manuscript form and were then published in Seville in 1493 as a single volume. A copy can be found at the Biblioteca del Monasterio de El Escorial: (Inc. 23-V-11), titled *Los tratados del Doctor Alonso Ortiz* (The Treatises of Dr. Alonso Ortiz). Isabel the Catholic had in her library an edition of the five treatises published in Seville and a single volume with *La herida del rey* (Elisa Ruiz García, *Los libros de Isabel la Católica: Arqueología de un patrimonio escrito* [Madrid: 2004], 483).

67 "la súbita tristeza desarma la razón [...] con el tiempo recobra poco a poco su vigor" (Alonso Ortiz, *Tratado consolatorio*, Biblioteca del Monasterio de El Escorial: 23-V-11, fol. 9r).

questions and listens.⁶⁸ In contrast to his treatise on the death of Prince Juan, in this work Ortiz positions Isabel as possessing superior Christian knowledge to that of her husband, whom she advises on how to come to grips with the loss of their child. The work begins with a typical *captatio benevolentiae* in which Ortiz explains to the cardinal that he has written a “librillo de duelo” (a little booklet on sorrow) in which the queen and the king find mutual solace in each other’s words as they ruminate on the death of the prince. The next part evokes a dream in which the Christian virtues (Faith, Hope, and Charity) and the Cardinal Virtues (Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, and Temperance) appear personified and comfort the grieving royal couple. Ortiz stresses the need to control one’s emotions. Thus, when he makes a crying Fernando face his wife to inform her of the sad event (as we know happened in real life), Isabel anticipates it and says,

My Lord and God has taken from us the bounty which he had given us in His mercy: to suffer is to have character. Well, let His will be done. He is merciful enough to me, insofar as I take joy in you, my husband; may He preserve your life.⁶⁹

The dying prince is portrayed in a similar light, accepting his fate while declaring: “May the will of Christ be done.”⁷⁰ He even questions his confessor, asking if the “excessive love” that he felt for his wife is the cause of his early demise: “I ask if I should blame this love I have for my own wife.”⁷¹ Here, Ortiz follows popular impressions regarding Juan’s death. As the familiar narrative goes, the prince, who was never too strong, felt such intense passion for his beautiful bride that he was further debilitated by the demands of the sexual life of a newlywed, with the result that he perished only six months after their

68 For Isabel, Ortiz wrote the *Liber de educatione Johannis Serenissimi Principis et primogeniti regum potentissimorum Castelle Aragonum et Siciliae Ferdinandi et Helisabet inclitya pro-sapia coniugum clarissimorum* (The book of the education of John, the most serene prince and first-born of the most powerful King of Castile, Aragon and Sicily, the renowned couple, Isabel of illustrious lineage and Ferdinand) (Núria Silleras-Fernández, “The Queen, the Prince, and the Ideologue: Alonso Ortiz’s Notions of Queenship at the Court of the Catholic Kings,” *Anuario de estudios medievales* 46.1 [2016]: 393–415).

69 “El Dios mío y Señor mío nos llevó el fruto que por su piedad nos avía dado: de sufrir es ánimo bueno, hágase su voluntad. Asaz me es misericordioso a mí, en tanto que gozo de ti, varón mío, cuya vida conserve” (Ortiz, *Tratado del Fallesçimiento*, 52).

70 “Cúmplase la voluntad de Cristo” (Ortiz, *Tratado del Fallesçimiento*, 57).

71 “pregúntote si es digno de culpa este amor de mi propia mujer” (Ortiz, *Tratado del Fallesçimiento*, 58).

wedding. Accepted wisdom regarding health and sex in the Middle Ages imagined women as needing sex to be well, and men as being weakened by it. Thus, the prince was seen as a victim of desire. Many years later this incident was recalled pointedly by the Emperor Carlos V (King of Spain, 1516–56) when he dictated secret instructions for his newly-wed son Felipe, cautioning him toward moderation in his sexual encounters with his own bride, Maria Manuela of Portugal, in order to avoid the fate of Prince Juan.⁷²

Next, Ortiz pictures Juan lamenting that he had sinned out of loving his wife too intensely. This appears to be a rebuttal of the literary topos of the “religion of love” which was prominent in the popular genres of songbook (*cancionero*) poetry and sentimental fiction. Pushing the boundaries of blasphemy, it presents the lady as a higher object of love than God in defiance of the First Commandment: “You shall have no other gods before me.” As Juan approaches death, Ortiz has him anticipate a grief similar to what he saw Princess Isabel suffer after the death of her husband, Afonso: “seeing you widowed of me, you will live your days in tears and unending bitterness.”⁷³

At this point, Ortiz has Isabel cast aside her queenly dignity when “soaked with tears, the queen could not disguise her deep maternal suffering, and forgetting her dignity, dropped down, falling to her knees and beginning to pray [...]”.⁷⁴ The key to this scene is the term *disimular*: the queen could no longer conceal her pain, but instead had to let go of her queenly persona and revert to being only a mother. This resonates with Mártir de Anglería’s description of the monarchs’ efforts to conceal their suffering and anticipates Castiglione’s *The Book of the Courtier* (1528), which proposes that a courtier must possess *sprezzatura*: the ability to perform complex activities and confront crises without apparent effort while maintaining a façade of emotional detachment. The difference between *ser* and *parecer* – what one is and how one feels, in contrast to how one appears to others – would become a preoccupation in the early modern period, as is reflected widely in the literature of the Golden Age.

72 Manuel Fernández Álvarez, *Corpus documental de Carlos V* (Salamanca: 1975), 2:90–103; Núria Silleras-Fernández, “*Sois a chave que une as duas coroas*: As bodas de D. Maria Manuela de Portugal e D. Filipe de Áustria,” trans. Ana María S.A. Rodrigues, in *Casamentos e família real portuguesa, êxitos e fracassos*, ed. Ana María S.A. Rodrigues, Manuela Santos Silva, and Ana Leal de Faria, vol. 4 (Lisbon: 2018): 235–67, at 253–57.

73 “viéndose biuda de mí, bivrà días de llor y de amargura perpetuos” (Ortiz, *Tratado del Falleçimiento*, 60).

74 “bañada en lágrimas, la reyna no pudo disimular el piadoso dolor materno y, olvidando su dignidad, inclinada, cayó de rodilas en tierra y desta manera oró ...” (Ortiz, *Tratado del Falleçimiento*, 61).

As the treatise concludes, the tone becomes increasingly fraught as Ortiz moves on to rather more risky terrain, when he has Fernando note that the sins of parents are paid for by their children, even three and four generations later.⁷⁵ In the dialogue, rather than take umbrage at the idea that she or her ancestors are responsible for this punishment from God, Ortiz has Isabel agree: “no one doubts that children are punished for the sins of their parents.”⁷⁶ This contrasts with what he had written in his earlier treatise for Princess Isabel, where he had portrayed her as a sort of Job who enjoyed good fortune until God arbitrarily decided to test her faith. Afonso’s death had not come about as a punishment for sinful conduct, but rather as an opportunity for young Isabel to demonstrate her virtue, grace, and love of God.⁷⁷

5 By Way of Conclusion

Isabel the Catholic’s last years were exceptionally difficult, as she lost three heirs in succession. Fernando’s were even worse. He survived long enough to see their daughter and heir Juana plunged into a debilitating bereavement after the death of her young husband, and he did not support her as queen. As a consequence, Castile passed out of the hands of the native Trastámaras and into the possession of the Habsburgs by way of Juana’s son Carlos. Nor could Aragon be saved: in 1509 Fernando’s son Juan by his second wife, Germana de Foix, died shortly after childbirth. The Crown of Aragón too would go to the Habsburgs.

Treatises like the one Ortiz wrote after the passing of Juan in 1497 show the limitations of the consolatory genre to bring solace to mourners. It may have done so, but often at the cost of attributing guilt to the survivors. If consolatory texts are taken as a point of departure to analyze how grief, remorse, and suffering were understood in a courtly context, one can draw conclusions that are both general and particular. On a general level these texts advocated the acceptance of God’s will and sought to reassure the reader of the immortality of the soul – each of which could be undermined by mourning that was either too intense or too long-lasting. On an individual level, a number of these works were specifically tailored to the Catholic Monarchs or their daughter Isabel or

⁷⁵ Ortiz, *Tratado del Falleçimiento*, 68.

⁷⁶ “no duda nadie que los hijos son punidos por los pecados de los padres” (Ortiz, *Tratado del Falleçimiento*, 68).

⁷⁷ Ortiz, *Tratado consolatorio*, Biblioteca del Monasterio de El Escorial: 23-V11, fol. 13v.

their close entourage, and therefore often ask quite pointed questions, whether directly or in the form of imagined dialogues.

For example, the notion that God might be punishing the Catholic Monarchs through these deaths is raised explicitly by Íñigo de Mendoza and Alfonso Ortiz. This idea suggested a critique not only of the morality of the monarchs but of Cardinal Cisneros, to whom Ortiz dedicated his treatise. As royal confessor and advisor, in Ortiz's view, Cisneros bore some responsibility for the rulers' moral health. This was a dangerous line of argument to follow, and it does not seem to have been pursued subsequently – particularly since many of the realm's subjects (and perhaps the royals themselves) were asking the same question.

The complicated intersection of frequent royal death, together with questions of authority, patronage, and the highly fraught emotional context of mourning, led to the decline of the genre of consolatory literature in royal circles. The genre was risky to compose and was perceived as having limited efficacy. The cure might even prove worse than the disease. Thus, if consolatory literature can be seen as akin to one of Reddy's spaces of "emotional refuge," the case of Isabel the Catholic shows its limits in that regard, and the difficulty of finding any such refuge in the late 15th-century royal court.

The "knives of pain" that tormented Isabel in her last years were clearly debilitating, reflected in the fact that for the first time she began to let Fernando assume a more direct role in ruling Castile. Her emotional desperation was further exacerbated by her poor physical health. Santa Cruz recounts how difficult her last three and a half months were due to illness:

[...] And so, her fevers became increasingly intense, such that often she lost her senses and it made her blurt out ravings. And because that Humor was gradually extending through her veins, she began to suffer from dropsy, such that she wished nothing more day and night but to drink water. And with this she began to gradually grow bloated, thus losing her strength. And she suffered in this way in great illness for a span of one hundred days.⁷⁸

78 "[...] Y desta manera le fue creciendo la calentura, a tanto que muchas veces la sacava de juicio y le hacía decir algunos desatinos. Y como aquel humor se le fuese derramando poco a poco por las venas, vino a caer en hidropesía, de manera que todo su deseo de noche y de día no hera sino beber. Y así se fue hinchando poco a poco y desflaqueándosele las fuerças. Y estubo desta manera por espacio de cien días continuos en grande enfermedad" (Alonso de Santa Cruz, *Crónica de los Reyes Católicos*, ed. Juan de Mata Carriazo [Seville: 1951], 1:302).

Isabel's final years were also defined by preoccupation over her succession, which was complicated by the queen's relationship with her daughter Juana, whom she sought to mold into a future ruler, much to the latter's resistance. As the royal secretary Lope de Conchillos put it in an undated letter he wrote at some point during those final years: "the queen [Isabel] is fine, but she is greatly troubled and exhausted by this princess [Juana], may God forgive her [...]"⁷⁹ For their part, on 20 June 1503 the doctors Soto and Juan also wrote a more detailed missive to Fernando expressing the same concerns regarding the negative effects that the conflict with Juana was having on Isabel's declining health.⁸⁰ If we are to believe that Isabel read the consolatory texts dedicated to her or to those close to her, she was likely wondering what responsibility she might have borne for the early demise of her children.

The queen died on 26 November 1504, fortunate to have been spared seeing the sorrows that lay in wait for two of her surviving daughters. Juana lost her crown and was incarcerated for more than four decades and would go down in posterity as "the Mad," while Catalina (Catharine of Aragon) was repudiated, humiliated, and abused by her husband Henry VIII. While the ideas of Alfonso Ortiz and Íñigo de Mendoza regarding Divine Providence and punishment hold no water among scholars today, if they and their early modern readers were to judge the outcome of the Catholic Monarchs' reign, they might indeed see their fate as a manifestation of God's retribution that would last for generations.

79 "La Reyna [Isabel I] se queda buena, aunque muy atribulada y cansada desta señora Princesa [Juana], Dios se lo perdone [...]" (letter from Lope de Conchillos to secretary Miguel Pérez de Almazán, Real Academia de la Historia: A-9, fol. 219r [Medina del Campo, 2 December (year unspecified)]).

80 Real Academia de la Historia: A-11, fols 380–81 (Alcalá de Henares, 6 June 1503).

Staging the Queen: Lope de Vega Reads Isabel *la Católica*

Edward H. Friedman

ISABEL: His outward presence is so beautiful / that no one could dispute the beauty / of the soul that he must have.

LOPE DE VEGA, *El mejor mozo de España*, vv. 2629–31

The appearance of history in literature takes many forms. The reproduction of historical acts and of historical figures may strive for realism, for allegorical effects, or for revisionism. An author may choose to let the historical record prevail or may place history at the service of art. There may be variations of truth – absolute and relative – in the interest of verisimilitude or a testing of literature’s ability to transform, reinterpret, or reject the historical record. In “The Historical Text as Literary Artifact,” Hayden White looks at historiography from the lens of narrative fiction. He emphasizes that Aristotle’s vision, in the *Poetics*, of history as objective and of poetry as subjective fails to take into consideration the construction (or constructedness) of historical writing, which must rely perforce on individual priorities, perspective, and incompleteness.¹ Historiography depends on the recourses of fiction, even when its goals may seem contradictory, because all views are partial and because all historians can attain only partial knowledge of the events under scrutiny.

White points to the mechanisms of fiction within historiographical texts. At the other end of the spectrum are historical elements within fictional texts, and this scenario offers the possibility of unlimited creative freedom or poetic license. Lope de Vega’s *El mejor mozo de España* (1611) deals with the matrimonial prospects of the future Queen Isabel of Castilla and with the procedures that led to the selection of the future King Fernando of Aragón as her spouse.²

1 Hayden White, *Tropics of Discourse* (Baltimore: 1978), 81–100. See also Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. Anthony Kenny (Oxford: 2013).

2 I have consulted the editions of *El mejor mozo de España* by Warren T. McCready (Salamanca: 1967); Federico Carlos Sainz de Robles, *Obras escogidas de Lope de Vega*, vol. 3 (Madrid: 1955), 1033–64; and David Gitlitz, *The Best Boy in Spain / El mejor mozo de España* (Tempe, AZ: 1999). The three-act play is not divided into scenes. In his bilingual edition, Gitlitz has added divisions within acts (*cuadros*). The epigraph of this essay is from Act

Lope de Vega is a consummate playwright, and in this *comedia* he quite obviously places dramatic creation over historical representation. As always, Lope is attentive to his particular formula, *el arte nuevo* ("the new art of writing plays"), and to the members of his audience.³ History and historical characters occupy center stage, but only to a degree, given that other figures and interests – of art and of reception – tend to share the stage, as it were, or even to predominate. Isabel is the focal character of *El mejor mozo de España*, but the title of the play refers to Fernando, who is willing to travel in disguise and to compete for her heart and her consent.

The frame and the framework of *El mejor mozo de España* would be the illustrious history of Spain and the union, in multiple senses, of Isabel and Fernando. Gender issues are crucial to the movement of the play and to the development of its leading characters. Isabel's status and her eventual ascent to the throne relate to the preeminence of the male line. No male heir of Enrique IV of Castilla would have to defer to Isabel (or to any other woman) following the death of the king. Isabel is a skilled negotiator, but she often has to work behind the scenes, allowing men to act on her behalf as arbiters, strategists, and, on occasion, metadramatists. Lope provides strong – albeit concise – characterizations of Isabel and Fernando as he differentiates among the pretenders, whose participation and revelation of suitability are metonymical in nature; the evocation of their fitness for the role of domestic partner is generally brief and clearly dismissive. The interaction between Isabel and Fernando is decisive and conclusive, but hardly detailed.

In *El mejor mozo de España*, emotions are intense but not exposed in comprehensive or prolonged fashion. Perhaps Lope preferred to concentrate on the ends rather than the means, since the audience would have known already the victor of the contest and the outcome of the resulting alliance. The goal of Isabel and her advocates is to identify the most distinguished of the eligible bachelors in Spain; the "best man" is masked as a humble boy, one whose sterling qualities show through despite his garb. Before Isabel and Fernando come together at the conclusion of the play, each must overcome a series of obstacles. There is – in Lope's concept of drama and traditional dramatic structures – an obligatory deferral of the *dénouement*, marked by conflicts, complications, misunderstandings, intrigues, and incongruities. Isabel is at the forefront of the action both in the beginning and at the play's culmination. She remains in the background during a substantial portion of the play, as her promoters seek

III: "De presencia tan hermosa, / cualquiera puede argüir / el alma que ha de tener." The translation is mine.

3 Lope de Vega, *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias*, ed. Enrique García Santo-Tomás (Madrid: 2006).

to protect her and to find her a husband, and while other characters seem to be guided by the dramatist's efforts to entertain, amuse, and enlighten the audience in ways more intrinsically theatrical than historical. History in *El mejor mozo de España* cohabits the stage with what could be termed the poetic arts and crafts, and with characters and situations that go well beyond the pairing of the protagonists and the realm of realism.⁴

El mejor mozo de España becomes a miscellany of sorts. But all its roads lead, if periphrastically, to the betrothal and the requisite unity of action. Lope highlights the intricacies of the selection process and complements the primary plot with patriotic gestures, attractions of various types, and comic relief. The illumination of the future Catholic Monarchs stands out among a stream of encounters and interactions that accentuate the political facets of the search and the personalities of those involved. The dramatist makes his play about the pairing of Isabel and Fernando, the unification of Spain, the theme of love, and the composition of poetry. Blending seriousness, humor, and an examination of human nature, *El mejor mozo de España* juxtaposes symbolism, social custom, and an array of competitions in order to regale and instruct the theater-going public.

Lope manifests loyalty to his country, zealous in its policies of exclusion and authoritarianism, as well as faith in his innovative criteria for the arrangement of plays. He demonstrates a consciousness of the power of Church and State and of the tastes and preferences of his audience. He is reverential toward Isabel, all the while making certain that Fernando is unquestionably the "best" among the candidates. Accepting the program of discrimination against and expulsion of religious foes, he seems to express – and not subtly – allegiance to the vision of Jews and Muslims as enemies of Spain. As implied author, to use the coinage of Wayne C. Booth in *The Rhetoric of Fiction*,⁵ Lope appears to laud, without qualification, the accomplishments of the *Reyes Católicos* and the national identity they forged. At the same time, the playwright seems committed to his own style and to his personal stance on dramatic disposition. As a consequence, *El mejor mozo de España* is a uniquely Lopean play.

Lope includes a series of *tableaux* that fit together by interweaving threads that link past, present and future. At the opening of Act I, Isabel is with her attendant and confidante Doña Juana de Guzmán. Isabel sits at a spinning wheel, where she alludes to the medieval queen Doña Urraca as well as to

4 Among the noteworthy historical studies of Isabel are those of John Edwards, *Ferdinand and Isabella: Profiles in Power* (Harlow, U.K.: 2004), and Giles Tremlett, *Isabella of Castile* (New York: 2017).

5 Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: 1961), especially 71–76 and 211–21.

Doña Elvira and Doña Sol, the daughters of El Cid, thereby bringing history and the roles of women into the dramatic trajectory. Isabel notes that she will send the cloth to the Holy Land when the piece has been finished. The musician Rodrigo enters with his guitar. He praises the triumph of King Enrique IV, Isabel's brother, in Olmedo, and his speech contributes to the play's exposition. The queen's daughter Juana (called La Beltraneja after her supposed father) has been deemed an illegitimate heir. Enrique's brother Alonso would thus be heir to the throne; and if he in turn were to die without heirs, the crown would pass to Isabel.

Rodrigo compliments Isabel on her discretion, integrity, and avoidance of idleness. She responds that monks stay busy through prayer, knights through combat, and women through reading and spinning, which makes Rodrigo think of the Fates. Rodrigo begins a song about King Rodrigo, the woman known as La Cava, King Muza, and Count Julián, mixing Spanish history and legend. Juana observes that Isabel has fallen asleep. She tells Rodrigo that when Isabel hears people talk of the Muslims, she is disturbed. Juana stresses that Isabel wishes to exile the Muslims from Spain and that she would strive to do so if she were to reign. Matters of religious unity are on her mind from an early age.

Isabel seems restless as Juana and Rodrigo exit. Isabel talks in her sleep, referring to the religious wars. A personified Spain emerges and directs Isabel to exchange her distaff for a sword. To her surprise, Spain encourages her to fight to banish the Muslims and Jews from the country, with an allusion to the power of King Felipe III centuries hence. Isabel awakens and marvels at the notion of helping to expel the enemies of Catholicism from Spain. The segment is reminiscent of the allegorical figure of Spain in Miguel de Cervantes's *Numancia*, a similar projection into the future.⁶

Juana announces the arrival of Don Gutierre de Cárdenas, the Marqués de Villena, and the Duque de Nájera. Nájera informs Isabel that her brother Don Alonso has died. Villena orders Isabel to put aside the distaff and seize the sword, for Castilla needs her. The king now has no other heir, and it behooves Isabel to marry promptly. The death of Don Alonso has opened a door. Isabel is a woman, but no man currently has precedence over her. Nonetheless, if Juana la Beltraneja were to wed, civil conflict could ensue. Nájera mentions ancient Israel, where Deborah fought alongside Barak as a woman warrior and as a ruler. The men are impressed by Isabel's valor and compare her to the Amazonian women. Isabel is heartened by their endorsement, but she insists that she must wait until King Enrique officially names her his heir. The men

6 Miguel de Cervantes, *El cerco de Numancia*, ed. Robert Marrast (Madrid: 1984).

recognize that it is important for them to consult with the king. From the outset, Isabel is cast in a positive light, surrounded by a prominent group of noblemen willing to support her cause. In this opening *tableau*, Lope brings history, dream imagery, the future of Spain, and the character of Isabel – whose intervention anticipates her capability as a sovereign – to the fore with musical and poetical accompaniment. History becomes dramatic.

There follows a dialogue between Martín and Rincón, two lackeys of the noblemen. Their mode is comedy, with a conversation revolving around Martín's boast that he is a gifted poet – an assertion disproven by the verses he recites. Martín plays a significant role as *gracioso*, a reminder that Lope thrives on mingling the serious with the comic. After King Enrique and the noblemen enter, the king pardons all those who have taken up arms against him. Villena states that Isabel is now next in line for the throne. The king agrees, saying that Doña Juana (*la Beltraneja*) and her mother will be apprehended, and that Juana will have no claim to succeed him. Don Gutierre praises this decision. The king chooses the site of the Toros de Guisando as the place where he will make the declaration; he insists, however, that Isabel cannot be married without his approval. There are no objections. Gutierre sends Martín to convey the decision to Doña Juana de Guzmán. Gutierre will follow, after consulting with the Archbishop of Toledo. Thus the preliminary steps have been taken. But much depends upon the king's constancy and on his will.

Later, Juana notifies Isabel that they have no provisions left. Isabel gives her a ring for a servant to sell so that they might purchase food. Isabel fears that she is being pursued. Juana assures her that the truth is on her side and that she will one day reign. Isabel feels that the king's advisors may have turned him against her, but Juana is convinced that marriage will save her. Isabel is preoccupied with how to cope with a number of potential suitors. Martín arrives, initially mistaking Juana for Isabel. He acts in a confused and confusing manner, but he conveys the message that Isabel is now the chosen heir. Don Gutierre arrives and explains the situation more cogently. He urges Isabel to travel to Guisando right away.

Lope inserts more comic relief in continued dialogue between Don Gutierre and Martín. Each agrees that Isabel deserves to be queen. The occurrences underscore the complex state of affairs and the calculations that drive each side in the naming of an heir. Lope contrasts Isabel's desperation with the lightheartedness that Martín brings to the play. The playwright elects to fill the stage with an assortment of topics, entanglements, and maneuvers. The stakes are high, and many people – from aristocrats to servants – figure in the scenarios. Isabel is the key player, of course, but as a woman she must rely on men to do her bidding; the delegates she has chosen are trustworthy and

primed for the task. There is every indication that Isabel is prepared for the job of being queen, but one cannot ignore her vulnerability by virtue of her gender and domestic status. Lope's play explores, to a great extent, what goes on in the private sphere.

Lope subsequently introduces Don Fernando of Aragón, who speaks with his colleague Don Fadrique about his pursuit of Isabel and about the competition. Don Fadrique, praising Isabel to the hilt, mentions suitors from Portugal and France. Fernando asks if those in the ranks of the Castilian nobility know that Aragón is interested, with Fadrique answering that he is not sure. Fernando confirms his interest, yet he does not wish to seem too forward, which would be demeaning to his position. Fadrique frames the matter as heaven's decision. Fernando continues to express his concern regarding the range of suitors. The diplomat Fadrique, in turn, worries about perceived discourtesy.

Deviating from the subject at hand, Fernando comments that he has seen a woman of inordinate beauty on the balcony and that he is attracted to her. Fadrique notes that she is a Muslim, descended from royalty. She practices Christianity, but her mother is a witch who could match Circe with her wiles. He reminds Fernando of the Jewess who kept King Alfonso fascinated for seven years; the reference is to Rahel la Ferosa, the mistress of the 12th-century King Alfonso VIII of Castilla. Fernando should avoid falling into such a trap, Fadrique cautions, for the ploy involves witchcraft. Fernando understands the danger of courting a Muslim and an enchantress, but he has promised to meet Celinda and declares that he never breaks his word. He insists on seeing her, but he promises not to enter her room. Celinda, for her part, speaks respectfully of her mother, who has warned her that Don Fernando will become her enemy and expel her from Spain. He replies that he is not king, nor does he aspire to be. Celinda's mother has asked her to deliver a note. Fadrique interjects that the note emanates from hell. Celinda tosses down the note and goes inside. Fadrique urges Fernando to ignore the note, but Fernando is anxious to examine its contents.

The paper consists of letters and painted images, which include a sword 'crowned' with an *F* and an *I*. There are cadavers of people who have been beheaded. Fadrique presses Fernando to be careful and to stay away from the women. Astounded by the conundrums contained on the paper, he interprets the sword as a sign of vengeance, injury, death, damage, and destruction. Fernando relates the differences in dress to the Muslims and the Hebrews. Fadrique believes that the *F* stands for Fernando; the *I* might refer to Isabel or to iniquity, infamy, or other evils – or, arguably, to *Imperator*. Fernando decides to order a suit with the two letters stitched on it. He is not perturbed by the drawings of the dead bodies, since they undoubtedly stand for his religious

enemies. The scene foresees the future, but the lead-in – with the Muslim woman to whom Fernando is attracted – is a rather unusual digression, or distraction. This dramatic venture relegates history to the margins while it posits a glimpse into the mindset of Fernando.

King Enrique proclaims before Isabel and a group of noblemen that she is his heir. Two by two, those assembled proceed to kiss her hand. Reference is made to the fact that the queen and Juana (*la Beltraneja*) are imprisoned. The king asks all but Isabel to retire, so as to reiterate that she cannot reign while he is alive. She assures him of her loyalty. He is concerned that those in Castilla do not favor him, primarily because he has given them no male heir. He has honored Isabel, but she owes him obedience in appreciation of his action. Isabel vows to respect his wishes, with a somewhat vague admonition: that he not return to the improprieties he has committed in the past in Spain, Italy, and France.⁷

The king invites Isabel to dine with him. She prostrates herself before him. He makes her rise, saying that he has heard of her poverty and pledging to erase her debts. As they exit, Don Gutierre emerges from his hiding place. The king's promises have inspired little confidence in him. He swears to find Isabel a husband and maintains that Castilla should never abandon its Gothic legacy, which has fueled its rulers. He asks Martín to get his things ready for a journey, but the lackey questions the wisdom of his master's audacious plan. Speaking with Peralta, Rincón opines that Juana (*la Beltraneja*) should be queen. Peralta argues in favor of Isabel and vows that he is willing to use his sword to defend her. Martín enters and asks what the two men are arguing about, asserting that this is not a case for lackeys to decide. They should make a wager rather than fight about it. Meanwhile, Don Gutierre tells Isabel that her safety is in jeopardy and that her advisors may not know how to protect her properly. She is forced to concur. Martín says that he will depart with his master, and the others will do the same. The tension mounts. Isabel must grapple with a chain of perils.

As the intrigue continues, the king orders that Isabel be held captive. He is advised that she has escaped with Gutierre's help. The king orders Gutierre to be captured and killed, but he has escaped as well. The Archbishop of Toledo has decreed that Isabel must be married in order to succeed to the throne. The king orders his arrest, but the archbishop also has fled. One of the king's knights informs him of those in line to court Isabel. They include Pedro Girón

7 On contemporaneous chroniclers' assertions of such improprieties, see Thomas Devaney, "Virtue, Virility, and History in Fifteenth-Century Castile," *Speculum* 88.3 (2013): 721–49, especially 743–46.

of the Order of Calatrava, the Duque de Segorbe,⁸ King Alfonso of Portugal, and a German prince from the Habsburg line. The knight gives special attention to Don Fernando of Aragón, whose attributes of character, comeliness, and lineage would seem to put him at the forefront of the contenders.

The king's response is emphatic: nothing will change while he is still alive. As Act I concludes, the leading figures have been delineated. Isabel is ambitious, forthright, and intrepid. She is hampered by restrictions based on gender and by the inconsistencies of King Enrique's behavior, but she has a group of devoted male supporters who are willing to risk their lives on her behalf and who take upon themselves the mission of vetting the pool of suitors. Isabel acknowledges the threats to her welfare, yet she faces the challenges with courage and aplomb. Don Fernando brings outstanding credentials to the table, and he is charming and self-assured. His dalliance with Celinda may be more a pretext to present the symbolism of the letters *F* and *I* than to obstruct the marriage plot. That is, the exercise may be a foreshadowing of the eventual union and a deferral of the play's resolution.

Act II will increase the complications. In the opening scene of the second act, the secretary of the Duque de Segorbe informs him that emissaries have come in secret from Castilla to Valencia. They discuss the secrecy of the visit and wonder if the news will be good or bad. Segorbe praises his noble origins and promises the secretary 10,000 ducats if the news is good. A page enters to announce the arrival of the gentlemen from Castilla. Segorbe takes this as a positive sign that he will soon be king. He now promises the secretary 20,000 ducats, with 2,000 for the page. A servant has heard the conversation and asks if there is a reward for him. Segorbe promises 1,000 ducats. Overconfidence seems to be a point here.

Don Ramiro, Don Juan, and Don Gutierre enter. Gutierre says to his associates that they must judge Segorbe. Ramiro notes that Isabel was not displeased by the portrait she saw of Segorbe. Gutierre says that he will have to be independently persuaded. He notes that Segorbe does not look at them or ask them in. Segorbe takes the allusion to "kissing his hand" literally. Gutierre notices how soft and smooth Segorbe's hands are, unlike the hands of the Castilians, which are calloused from fighting the Muslims. He wishes Segorbe well and says that they will take their leave. Segorbe is surprised. Gutierre justifies his decision: the duke has hands showing no indication of having labored for worthy causes, and therefore these are not the hands for Isabel. Segorbe cannot understand the reaction, but even his servant can. The secretary blames him

8 Segorbe in some editions.

for putting on too solemn a face; in an aside, the secretary reproaches his master's excessive pride. The duke's brother enters and requests an explanation for the rapid departure of the emissaries. He asks his brother to go after them, and he agrees.

Here we see how Lope has decided to make the judgment swift and definitive: Don Gutierre trusts his power to use external clues to see through to the soul of a person. The duke's silken hands become a metonym for the arrogance, conceit, and self-importance of the duke, and that is all that is needed for a ruling. Segorbe is an individual and an emblem of the uniformly deficient aspirants. In sum, Gutierre condemns the presumptuousness of Segorbe. Ramiro senses that one day Segorbe will realize his flaws. Gutierre notes that he will have to defend his decision to Isabel in a manner she can comprehend. Segorbe's brother and the secretary enter, begging the men to return to Valencia. Gutierre diplomatically states that he can describe accurately Segorbe's temperament to Isabel. With Segorbe out of the picture, Gutierre observes that Girón might be in luck. He and his companions will proceed to Calatrava in the hope that fate will be on their side.

Lope here emphasizes the unmitigated threats to Isabel. Isabel, with Juana by her side, is desperate, for King Enrique is pursuing her mercilessly and endeavoring to impede her marriage plans. The Duque de Nájera informs her that a Frenchman bearing the cross of Saint John on his chest seeks an audience with her. The delegate, who treats Isabel with great reverence, delivers a letter from King Louis XI of France, who wishes to negotiate a marriage with his brother the Prince of Guiana. Isabel responds that she will consider the offer, but she cannot deal with the matter now, for she is a fugitive from King Enrique and has no home of her own. The envoy leaves. Isabel asks Nájera what he thinks. He believes that she could consider the prospect, but that they should keep Girón in contention. Isabel says that she has written to Gutierre, who is on the road. Martín reports to him that there are guards everywhere blocking access to Isabel. He asks Martín to relay to Isabel the message that he is near Zaragoza. He prefers not to send a note that might be intercepted by the opposition.

When Gutierre asks about Isabel's confidante Juana, Martín replies that she is yearning to see him. Gutierre entreats Martín to describe Juana, allowing the *gracioso* to recite a poem in her honor. Gutierre rewards Martín with four doubloons for his efforts. In this scene, Lope contrasts sharply the heightened dangers facing Isabel and her supporters with an accent on the secondary love plot and the light touches provided by Martín. The drama of the historical situation is building, but Martín's showcasing of his poetic skills is a diversion in the double sense.

The continuation takes the play in another direction. Fernando, Sancho, Fadrique, and Pedro enter with rackets. After a set of games, the men are tired and decide to change their clothes. Fernando asks them to speak about their activities of the night before. He will be the last to speak. Sancho had been approached by a woman of color. She smelled sweet, but she could not conceal her dark skin. Fadrique visited some 'maidens' who were making pastries. Two women gave him a pastry filled with pure pepper; when they thought that he might avenge their act, they threw flour at him. He looked like a mouse found in a mill. Pedro says that his situation was far more serious than the children's games of the others. He visited a woman of a certain age. When he arrived, he found her to be quite the sight. Frightened, he immediately tried to escape, but ran into a stone pillar and hurt his nose. Trying again, he stepped into a trough, fell, and sprained his ankle. Some passers-by rescued him. Pedro's account is judged to be the best. Fernando reprimands him for pursuing older women. Fernando, for his part, set out in the suit emblazoned with the *F* and the *I*. Some women whom he encountered sought to interpret the symbolism of the letters in diverse ways. The scene is a strange opening to what follows.

After a servant informs Fernando that there are visitors wishing to see him, he brings in Gutierre, Ramiro and Juan. Gutierre bids Fernando to consult with him in private. When Gutierre mentions that he serves Isabel, Fernando removes his hat as a courtesy, indicating the reverence that he owes her. Hearing this, Gutierre shouts to his colleagues that he has found the future king. Fernando is perplexed. Gutierre explains that he has been charged with helping to find a suitable marriage partner for Isabel, about whom he is gravely concerned, and that Fernando's gentility and gallantry have won him and his associates over. Fernando is greatly surprised and elated, and he accepts Gutierre's invitation to come to a secret place where Isabel can see him. When Fernando asks how he should travel, Gutierre replies that he should go in disguise – any disguise that lessens the danger into which he is casting himself. Fernando decides to dress as a stable boy, a *mozo de espuelas*, at which point Gutierre notes that he will be the best boy in Spain, "el mejor mozo de España." Gutierre again shows himself to be a quick study, to say the least. A single sign on the part of Fernando convinces him that this is the best man for the job of reigning with Isabel.

In the meantime, Isabel tells Juana that the French prince should look elsewhere. When Juana inquires about Fernando, Isabel leaves the question open. Juana remarks that Fernando looks handsome in the portrait they have seen; the physical appeal is there. Some knights from Calatrava have sent for their Master, Girón. The two women decide to play a game. They go through the alphabet to match letters with names. *F* attracts their attention, as does

G (representing Gutierre) for Juana. Theater temporarily overshadows history. Rodrigo reports that King Enrique has become less of a brother and more of an enemy who is now plotting against Isabel. The women ask Rodrigo to pick a letter. He picks *F*. Rodrigo finds a ring that Juana had lost. Isabel borrows it, promising to give her back two rings. Isabel hears noises and wonders if it could be an attack by Enrique. She says that the Conde de Buendía, in Dueñas (as is she), will not resist. Juana urges her to flee, while Isabel bemoans the fact that she will have to continue to run from her brother until she has a husband to protect her.

The women set off, and Gutierre, Ramiro, Juan, Martín, and Fernando, dressed as a *mozo*, enter; they are poised at the border of Castilla. Gutierre praises Martín for the speed at which he has handled his task. He reports that the Castilians seem enchanted with the prospect of Fernando as a marriage partner and that he is likely Isabel's favorite among the suitors. Martín advises Gutierre to return to Zaragoza. Gutierre notes that those in Castilla seem to think highly of Girón. Martín – who does not recognize Fernando in disguise as Ginés – comments that there is something odd about the *mozo*. Gutierre answers that Ginés is relatively new to the job. There ensues a comic dialogue between Fernando and Martín, who disparages him. Fernando, uncomfortable, mentions that he has recently become engaged and that his fiancée has gussied him up. He is relieved when Martín finally leaves.

Martín is offstage for only a short period; he returns, and more comic dialogue ensues. Fernando tells Gutierre that he will continue to play the role of Ginés. The dialogue continues, the act ending as Martín proclaims that Ginés is “el mejor mozo de España.” Fernando is a sportsman, an actor, a friend to his friends – a charmer on many levels. He is respectful, dignified, and deemed to be sincere. Gutierre, the most trusted of Isabel's advisors, is persuaded that Fernando is worthy of his backing.

In the first scene of Act III, a captain apprises Girón that the people of Castilla have felt worried by his absence. Girón argues that it was necessary to ensure his victory. When the captain notes that noblemen are coming from Córdoba and Sevilla, Girón brags that he is already king of Castilla. The captain warns him about tempting fate, but Girón remains confident. Suddenly – out of nowhere – Girón feels a sharp pain and cries out that he is dying. The captain sees this as an act of God. Girón asks for divine mercy. With that, he is removed from the scenario. In a single stroke, he has been done in by *hubris*. Through the *ex machina* solution, another name can be crossed off the list of suitors. Self-conscious theater will take over for a spell.

Lope then returns to Gutierre, Fernando (as Ginés) and company at an inn. Martín is put in charge of preparing dinner. He asks ‘Ginés’ to be the waiter.

Gutierre says that the *mozo* will help later. Martín complains, including to Ginés himself; he delivers a speech about the abuse he is suffering. A servant girl serendipitously named Isabel enters. She insults Martín as she rebukes his advances, and the two engage in insults. Martín exits. Isabel notes that she has become attracted to Ginés and how these emotions are new to her. As Fernando enters, she complains about Martín. Fernando explains why her name is significant for him. Isabel professes her love and pleads with Ginés to take her with him. She wants to hug him, but he refuses and asks her to check whether Martín is awake. Martín enters, berates Isabel (who defends herself and Ginés), and exits. Martín lays claim to his consort; while Fernando insists that he has not reciprocated her attention, Martín advises Ginés to treat Isabel like a mule. Ginés promises not to pursue her, since he has another sweetheart.

As Martín exits, Gutierre, Juan, and Ramón enter and sit down to dinner. There are surprises to come. Fernando expresses surprise over Martín's reaction to him and blames it on the 'other' Isabel. As Fernando seats himself at the table, Gutierre, Juan, and Ramiro remove their hats out of respect. Martín sees this, and the noblemen are trapped. They make up the idea that they have made a wager with Ginés that he cannot eat all three of their dinners. Martín joins in the game, citing a world-turned-upside-down situation – in which master waits on servant – as an excuse. Martín requests wine and offers a toast to Isabel's health. This motivates Fernando to join in the toast. Juan senses that people are approaching. Ramiro fears (and expresses to Fernando) that all is lost. Fernando orders that the table be taken away. Martín reacts in surprise; his suspicion has been further aroused. All exit but Fernando, who, in a sonnet, hopes that Isabel will find him acceptable.

Fadrique enters with a servant, whom he orders to hide a trunk containing jewels. The servant asks Fernando if he works at the inn. Fernando declares that he is a stranger. Fadrique presses Fernando on where he is traveling and with whom. Fernando replies that they have nearly arrived at their destination. Fadrique asks if his masters are Castilian. Fernando says, "and also Aragonese." Fernando wonders if he can keep up the disguise; indeed, Fadrique recognizes him. Fernando explains that his dress is part of a marriage plan and that he had to leave in haste. Fadrique – happy when Fernando says that he can be a witness to the wedding – ends the segment by calling him again "el mejor mozo de España." Fernando is making his way toward victory, but there are additional complications on both sides, as Isabel also travels in disguise. Metatheater vies with history.

In the next scene, Isabel and Juana lament their lack of a protected place in which to live. They have heard that King Enrique is occupying Isabel's palace with his forces, and they learn that Girón has died suddenly. They have received

no word from Gutierre. Isabel would like to return to Dueñas, suggesting that they undertake the trip by night and dressed as farmgirls. They are unprotected and must live in fear, but Isabel feels that God will watch over her. The list of suitors has been reduced, but the king is most definitely her adversary.

Enrique is, in fact, aligned with his supporters to keep Fernando from reaching Isabel. The king orders his men to make camp. When he leaves, the soldiers speak about Isabel, the suitors, and the issue of marriage. One mentions the pretender from Portugal, another the prince from France, then Girón and his unexpected death. As the two 'farmgirls' approach, the soldiers flirt with them. Isabel and Juana succeed in their disguise. The king enters and asks where they are headed at such a late hour, but the women reply that they are on their way home after selling their bread. Isabel questions, with double intention, why one in power would pit soldiers against a defenseless woman when there are Muslims who need to be expelled from the country. The king says that his soldiers will aid that woman, but Isabel perseveres in her argument that the king cannot live forever and that she cannot see how he objects to his sister being wed. The king can only reply that even the common people have strong opinions about a royal match. The king lets Isabel and Juana depart, unaccompanied by the soldiers, who would have relished the opportunity to go with them. The women feel great relief.

The king remains firm: he feels that he can keep Isabel under his control, and he vows to make her obey him, since what he asks for is just. Despite the deception of the disguise and the pointed remarks, Isabel is hardly free. The king remains an extremely serious threat. The "best man" has yet to reach his desired object; and until that happens, Isabel must keep her wits about her. Rincón notifies Martín that Isabel, who had fled three days earlier, has returned. Martín (who had been sent ahead) shares secret news: a bridegroom might be on his way. He adds that he has dined with a king.

The final scene brings Isabel and Fernando together. Nájera is impressed that Isabel was able to create such an effective disguise. She thanks God for her good fortune and for her ability to think on her feet. Juana enters with the good news that Don Gutierre and others are in Dueñas. Gutierre reports to Isabel and expresses his love for Juana. He summarizes: Segorbe (Valencia) is unbearably arrogant, while Fernando (Aragón) is the epitome of humility and courtesy and a master of camouflage. Isabel is disposed to favor Fernando, but she must first meet him and judge for herself. Isabel expresses her confusion in a sonnet. Gutierre, Juan, Ramiro, Fadrique, and other well-dressed noblemen enter, with Fernando in a Gascon cape, his face covered. Fernando is most content with what he sees. Isabel is equally pleased, but more subtle in her

response that there is a bishop in town ("Un obispo hay en la villa," v. 2593), implying that they could marry there and then.

Isabel and Juana discuss the many favorable qualities of Fernando. His handsome face reflects a beautiful soul. He is kind, modest, and caring. They are an ideal match. The engagement is confirmed. The celebration commences, with loving words between Isabel and Fernando, and with music and dance. The allegorical figure of Castilla reappears, with Muslims and Hebrews at its feet, and with a card that puts forth a crowned *F* and *I*. Castilla elucidates the symbolism and touts the future of the Spanish nation under the Catholic Monarchs.

Fernando offers thanks to Martín. Isabel gives Juana's hand to Gutierre, promising to provide the dowry. Fernando wants to repay his debt to Fadrique. Fadrique says that it will be repaid in service to Fernando. Gutierre pronounces the final speech, in which he repeats the words of the play's title. The *dénouement* transpires in a safe space, from which King Enrique is conspicuously absent. It seems understood that the behind-the-scenes plotting has succeeded, confirmed by the appearance and declaration of Castilla. The Reyes Católicos indisputably have history on their side.

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In *El mejor mozo de España*, theatricality dominates over history, but in terms more complementary than dialectical. Lope's formula for drama is in full view. The play is about eminent historical personages and about the linking of two kingdoms, a matrimony that will permanently affect the future of Spain. The unity of action is based on the acceptance of the match between Isabel of Castilla and Fernando of Aragón. The bottom line will come as no surprise to readers/spectators with even the barest minimum of historical knowledge. Nevertheless, Lope creates a steady stream of complications, tensions, detours, and amusements. The aim is jointly to reach the conclusion and to defer the conclusion, so that the process is modulated, calculated to fill in the space between the problem – the dramatic conflict – and its remedy. The elements of deferral include the allegorical figure of Castilla (Spain), symbolism of various forms, the resistance and contradictions of King Enrique, comic relief by Martín and his interlocutors, the courtship of Gutierre and Juana, the pretensions of the candidates for Isabel's hand and their advocates, the disguises of the protagonists, and other plot devices that impede a prompt resolution of the matrimonial dilemma.

Lope places the immediate dramatic action in the context of past and future, seeming to delight in the amplification of the temporal base, that is, in

the irony of placing the historical past into the theatrical present. The abundance of allusions from sundry sources enriches the content, extending the force of the poetry and the relation of events portrayed to what preceded them and what is to ensue.

The title notwithstanding, Isabel is the focal character and driving force of *El mejor mozo de España*. Lope accentuates the strong will, bravery, and irrefutable intelligence of Isabel without failing to take into consideration the limits imposed by her gender. She must wait until a potential male heir dies, and she must find a matrimonial partner so as to make a claim to the throne. She does not know whether King Enrique will be her benefactor or her enemy, and, as a result, she must live in a constant state of insecurity. She comprehends the precariousness of her position, but she is resolute to move forward. She combines political ambitions, patriotism, and a commitment to unifying disparate factors (and factions) in society. Her fierce nationalism defines her personality and her actions. She has a purpose – a vocation – before she finds a mate, and before the king is deceased.

Hindsight benefits the playwright in the depiction of this future queen. Isabel is shown as extraordinarily competent, able to choose her advisors carefully but also able to act on her own. She is metatheatrical and a gifted actress, able to convince the king of her feigned identity as a farmgirl. The opening section of the play places Isabel in what might be called a 'womanly' position as she progresses from a passive to an active role in the plot. Circumstances push her to change course. Isabel is dependent on men, but the audience knows that she will co-rule with Fernando and that together they will change the face of Spain.

Compared with his rivals, Fernando is superior in every regard: the most gracious, the most benevolent, the most cultured, the most handsome, a true *galán*, a heroic gentleman, and a leading man. He wins over Don Gutierre in less than a minute, whereas others have lost the representative's vote in the same amount of time. Like Isabel, Fernando is adept at acting and improvising – talents likely to be valorized by Lope de Vega the playwright. When Fernando shows interest in other women, there is a good reason behind it. The note from Celinda's mother is filled with imagery, and the servant girl Isabel causes confusion. Again like Isabel, Fernando does not resist danger. He wants to prove himself to Isabel, no matter the obstacles. He validates Gutierre's belief in first impressions, and he conquers Isabel's heart shortly after their first meeting. The images on paper lead to the tailoring of a suit jacket with the 'crowned' initials *F* and *I* as a prefiguration of the union that will affect history in radical measure.

The characterization of the protagonists (and of supporting players) in *El mejor mozo de España* could be labeled as anti-psychological, in that positive and negative facets of personality are conveyed through broad brush strokes, and impactful judgments are made thereby. The audience should not be discomfited by this approach, for history has already been written. The 'broad brush strokes' approach to characterization – which can be associated with the figure of metonymy – allows Lope to put forth a range of characters who demonstrate their primary traits and their function within the play without lengthy exposition. This directness serves the broad historical base of the text and the incorporation of Lopean theatricality aimed at pleasing the audience.

One can find here an effort to produce tragicomedy. Isabel's life is in danger throughout the play, but the action regularly yields to levity. The stage time given to the *gracioso* Martín may be the most patent example of this aspect of the *comedia nueva*. Martín is by no means an extra (an appendage), however, because he interacts with other characters in crucial ways; Lope fully integrates him into the dramatic scheme. Similarly, the foreshadowing of a unified Spain is exhibited in a manner that is straightforward and justifiable: *dulce et utile*. Lope reflects Spain's precise brand of patriotism by disdaining – allegorically and in the dialogue proper – the presence in the Iberian Peninsula of the Jewish and Muslim peoples at multiple junctures. There does not seem to be in *El mejor mozo de España* the type of subversive undercurrent found in many early modern Spanish plays, among them Lope's own *Fuenteovejuna*, which coincidentally features the Catholic Monarchs some years thereafter.⁹

Before her marriage, Isabel's well-being depends on her place in the line of succession. When her brother Don Alonso dies unexpectedly and the claim of Juana *la Beltraneja* is dismissed, Isabel finds herself at once in a viable position and subject to hostility and antagonism from the man who controls her fate. King Enrique professes to honor and guide her, but he shifts his stance again and again. Isabel and her advocates must determine the best strategy for handling both the king's conditions and his unpredictability. Her struggles form the basis for the plot and the events that lead to her betrothal. The coordinating movement takes Fernando from best boy to best man and then groom-to-be. In this peculiar – i.e. unusual – version of history, Lope molds the facts with his conception of drama. He checks off every box of his *desiderata* and pays tribute to the *Reyes Católicos* even before they merit that epithet.

El mejor mozo de España navigates suspense by concentrating on danger in the moment. Although the audience will be aware of the anticipated happy

9 Lope de Vega, *Fuenteovejuna*, ed. Juan María Marín (Madrid: 2006).

ending, the dangers are real. Lope designs the play in such a way that dire circumstances ring true, even though they may be interconnected with – and undercut by – lighter moments. The dramatist makes short shrift of the deaths of Don Alonso and Don Pedro Girón. Each of these fortuitous cases positions Isabel and Fernando, respectively, closer to the throne. The crossing of chronological boundaries may be the strongest source of irony in the play. The audience will be familiar with, if not know the back story behind, the repercussions of the actions illustrated. Lope relies on perspectivism, and he knows how to relax the momentum of the primary plot with meaningful digressions. Throughout the play, Isabel is confronted with challenges based on her place in line for the throne as well as her gender. She is constantly tested, but constantly successful in proving herself worthy to rule. Fernando, too, is capable of passing the tests to which he is subjected. Each resorts to masquerade and to devices of stealth that end by bringing the couple together.

Lope can spare certain details because the outcome is not in question. The rivalry among the pretenders is resolved. King Enrique ultimately will be unable to prohibit a match that seems to have been made in heaven. Isabel and her collaborators outmaneuver their enemies. Fernando and his supporters likewise rise to the occasion. The supporting players Don Gutierre, Juana, and Martín receive poetically just rewards. The play's projection into the future is a recap of the past, and this affects the levels of irony and of historicity contained therein. *El mejor mozo de España* commemorates an auspicious pairing and makes evident the fact that the loftiest achievements are the products of – *con perdón* – blood, sweat, and tears. That the difficultly-managed and much-lauded union is accomplished, paradoxically, through definitive acts of exclusion such as the expulsion of the Jews and the Reconquest of Granada is beyond the parameters of the play. Lope honors select glorious moments in the history of Spain.

El mejor mozo de España has not enjoyed the critical interest of Lope de Vega's more canonical plays. This is due, in part, to the panning of the play by the eminent Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo, who saw substantive historical events treated as a tale that could only appeal to indiscriminating "old ladies" (no comment). Unfortunately, history alone was not enough for Lope, according to Don Marcelino.¹⁰ Those scholars who have studied the play in greater detail – notably among them, DeLys Ostlund, María Y. Caba, Alice Brooke, and

10 "Un asunto tan grande como la unión de los dos reinos en la cabeza de su príncipes más gloriosos [...] está tratado como un cuento de Viejas" (Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo, *Estudios sobre el teatro de Lope de Vega*, ed. Enrique Sánchez Reyes [Madrid: 1949], vol. 5, 110).

David Gitlitz – have found it far richer and far more open to interpretation.¹¹ They have laudably investigated Lope's sources, aspects of the play's historical background, accuracy (with respect to historiographical readings) in the representation of Isabel and Fernando, the humility *topos*, the games and allegorical renderings, and, logically, manifestations of the interplay of fact and fiction. In a chapter on *El mejor mozo de España* in *The Re-Creation of History in the Fernando and Isabel Plays of Lope de Vega*, Ostlund celebrates the work as a festive text, a testament to a crucial time in Spanish history and a glorification of the past that bears on the present of its original audience. In "Issues of Female Rule in Lope de Vega's *El mejor mozo de España* and *La discordia en los casados*," she contrasts Lope's examples of women rulers: one exemplary, one destructive. Ostlund explores the correlation between gender and leadership.

In *El mejor mozo de España*, Isabel is marked by her sex and by principles that governed the behavior of women. This dramatic effort may prove more poetry than history; yet, in theatricalizing Isabel, Lope looks at the limits imposed by society, by historians, by the legends that accompany historiography, and by contemporary feminist theory. María Caba, who studies the play alongside the same playwright's *El niño inocente de La Guardia*, also notes the dramatist's idealization of the future queen as seeking to exalt a providential period in Spanish history and to make Isabel a solid protagonist, who all the same cannot fully escape the barriers of her gender. In the chapter of *Isabel la Católica en la producción teatral española del siglo XVII* dedicated to Lope, Caba emphasizes the dramatist's versatility and his recourse to the resources of openness, enigma, and ambiguity in his playwriting. In "El mejor mozo?: The Representation of the Future Catholic Monarchs in Lope de Vega's *El mejor mozo de España*," Brooke makes a highly intelligent and detailed argument for the play as a commentary on the 15th and the 17th centuries, an analysis with relevance to the *Reyes Católicos* and to the reign of Felipe III. She observes what have been called fault lines, or potential for subversion, in Lope's text. She focuses on certain inconsistencies of character that would seem to indicate a

11 See DeLys Ostlund, *The Re-Creation of History in the Fernando and Isabel Plays of Lope de Vega* (New York: 1997) and "Issues of Female Rule in Lope de Vega's *El mejor mozo de España* and *La discordia en los casados*," *Bulletin of the Comediantes* 53.2 (2001): 291–315; María Y. Caba, *Isabel la Católica en la producción teatral española del siglo XVII* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK: 2008), 29–82; Alice Brooke, "El mejor mozo?: The Representation of the Future Catholic Monarchs in Lope de Vega's *El mejor mozo de España*," *Bulletin of the Comediantes* 63.2 (2011): 15–26; and David Gitlitz, "El mejor mozo de España de Lope: Montaje de un mito nacional," *El escritor y la escena* (Actas del I Congreso de la Asociación Internacional de Teatro Español y Novohispano de los Siglos de Oro), ed. Ysla Campbell (Ciudad Juárez: 1993), 129–35.

two-sided, or duplicitous, nature in both Fernando and Isabel. The contradictions therein are signs, for Brooke, that point to issues associated with Felipe III, a sovereign who had to deal with maintaining the monarchy and with larger spiritual issues.

In *Playing the King: Lope de Vega and the Limits of Conformity*, Melveena McKendrick devotes a single sentence specifically to *El mejor mozo de España*, which she classifies as a nonpolitical play and which she describes as romanticizing the courtship of Fernando and Isabel.¹² This suggests that the critic does not view the play as an attempt to produce a historical document. I would agree. Lope elects not to strive for the shortest line between Point A and Point B, Isabel's initial plight and her betrothal to Fernando. The playwright instead appears to take great pleasure in filling the empty dramatic spaces with a keen display of his theatrical bag of tricks. My final assessment calls to mind a 1993 paper by Gitlitz, who later, in 1999, translated the play and provided a solid introduction to its theatrical and historical spheres. In "*El mejor mozo de España* de Lope: Montaje de un mito nacional," Gitlitz stresses audience familiarity with the topic, thus seeing the play as a confirmation of what is already widely known in Spanish society rather than as a political commentary or an opportunity for subversive discourse. For Gitlitz, *El mejor mozo de España* falls under the rubric of pageant play.¹³ I would describe the play as Lope's version, and vision, of a historical pastiche that appeals to national pride and to the emotions of his public. While I applaud the commentaries that bring in the possibility of subversion, I do not discern King Felipe III looming in the wings.

El mejor mozo de España is ingeniously crafted, very much a text that plays with time and that seems to have no problem with deploying poetic license. It is crammed with characters, *tableaux*, and spatial shifts. It is patriotic and evocative on distinct planes. The woman at its center is illustrious, symbolic, and fabled, faced with transition upon transition. Fate alternately acts as her ally and her opponent. The play's conclusion signals a new beginning. Lope gives the audience a build-up to the grandeur that is to come. History is essential to the design of *El mejor mozo de España*, but the historical Queen Isabel has a theatrical counterpart that is every bit as commanding, persuasive, and engaging. Why would Lope have chosen to write about the path that leads to the union of Isabel and Fernando? Intentionality is out of bounds, but one may surmise that this episode in history, brimming with intrigue and upheavals, lends itself to the playwright's breadth of sources and stratagems and to

12 Melveena McKendrick, *Playing the King: Lope de Vega and the Limits of Conformity* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK: 2000), 39.

13 Gitlitz, "Montaje," 135.

the cause of complexity, a staple of the striking *ars combinatoria* exemplified in his works. History and theater history are continually in play. The recorded (and imagined) past intersects with and helps to determine the plot of *El mejor mozo de España*. Lope is most respectful of the royal figures, but the stage and the dramatist – not historiography and the historian – guide the action. History supplies the raw material; Lope creates the art. He does service to the Catholic Monarchs, to his dramatic ideology, and to the public.

The Legend of Isabel *la Católica*, Founder of Spain

Caroline Travalia

– Spain!
– One!
– Spain!
– Great!
– Spain!
– Free!¹



This chant was often repeated at the end of official acts in Spain during the dictatorship of General Francisco Franco (1939–1975). Formalized by the Franco regime,² the slogan incarnated the idea defended by the *Franquistas* that Spain was a united, great, and free country.

When Franco came to power he found himself at the head of a nation divided and devastated by civil war. In order to encourage unity among Spaniards and at the same time justify his authoritarian regime, Franco promoted the idea that a unified Spain dated back to the reign of Isabel I of Castile and Ferdinand II of Aragon, the Catholic Monarchs³ (1474–

1 “España, Una, España, Grande, España, Libre.”

2 The chant was used by the Falangists, who incorporated it into their anthem “Cara al sol.” In the context of the Spanish Civil War, Franco aligned himself with the *falangista* movement, even going so far as to pose for a painting imitating the famous depiction of José Antonio Primo de Rivera holding the Falangist flag in his left hand while raising his right hand. Adopting their fascist ideology was a means of ingratiating himself with Hitler and Mussolini while also contributing to the containment of communism, a strategy which gained him support from the United States.

3 It is difficult to dissociate Isabel from her union with Ferdinand; this is why the Catholic Monarchs are typically considered as one entity. This fusion remains with us largely because she worked so hard not only to project an image of the two rulers as one (their motto “they amount to the same, the same they amount to, Isabel like Ferdinand”; in the original Spanish, “tanto monta, monta tanto, Isabel como Fernando,” comes to mind), but also to take political steps equating herself with her husband: “[A]lthough she was legally queen

1516).⁴ With this National Catholic approach, Franco sought to awaken a nostalgic, nationalistic feeling among Spaniards that would give meaning and force to his dictatorial government.

Is it true that Isabel and Ferdinand founded the Spanish nation? What purpose did this notion serve, and what other Spanish rulers besides Franco utilized it? To what degree did this mythification and idealization of Isabel and the Catholic Monarchs potentially contribute to the problems faced by Spain and its various autonomous communities today?

1 The Concept of Nation

Throughout the years, of the numerous authors and historians who have taken on the debate about the birth of the Spanish nation, many have cited the era

regnant in Castile, and Ferdinand only king consort, Isabel insisted at the outset that the reign be publicized as joint, aware of the limitations circumscribing a woman ruler. So, in directing Hernando de Talavera to draw up a certain decree, she stipulated: 'póngase rey e reyna' (sign it 'king and queen') [Archivo General de Simancas, Diversos de Castilla, leg. 39, fol. 43]. She and Ferdinand faced one another as equals on coins, and they spoke as one in the Cortes of Castile, the parliament she controlled but rarely called. Once her position as proprietary ruler was established, she promoted the myth that they constituted a single royal entity ever after" (Peggy K. Liss, "Isabel, Myth and History," in *Isabel la Católica, Queen of Castile: Critical Essays*, ed. David A. Boruchoff [New York: 2003], 60). Despite the image she sought to project, Isabel was the one with the true power: "[...] it was not the Aragonese Ferdinand who was destined to fulfill [the] prophecy [made in 1476 by Diego de Valera in his *Doctrinal de Príncipes* which he dedicated to Ferdinand that 'not only [...] you would be lord of the kingdoms of Castile and Aragon which belong to you by right, but you will hold sway over all Spain and will reform the imperial seat through the illustrious blood of the Goths, from whom you come and which for so long has been spattered and spilled'], but rather his Castilian queen, unquestionably the true head of the new kingdom, despite her efforts to present the couple as a single ruling entity" (Jesús Pérez-Magallón, "The Poetic and Dramatic Construction of Isabel la Católica in the Theater of Lope de Vega," in *Isabel la Católica, Queen of Castile*, ed. David A. Boruchoff [New York: 2003], 197). It was Isabel who inherited the Crown of Castile, the largest of the territories at the time and the greatest contributor of taxes, and Isabel who financed the conquest of the Americas. A statue of Isabel, not both rulers, greets visitors to the Organization of American States in Washington, D.C. with the inscription, "Isabel I the Catholic / Queen of Castile / of Aragon / of the islands / of dry land / of the ocean sea" ("Ysabel I la Católica / Reina de Castilla / de Aragón / de las islas / y tierra firme / del mar océano").

- 4 The exact dates of the Catholic Monarchs' reign are difficult to specify. Isabel became Queen of Castile in 1474; however, Fernando was not proclaimed King of Aragon until 1479. Isabel died in 1504 but passed the Castilian crown on to her and Fernando's daughter Juana. Fernando in the meantime continued as King of Aragon until he died in 1516.

of the Catholic Monarchs as a key moment in this event. It is important to note that the term *nation* had a different meaning in the time of Isabel. Referring to “a collection of inhabitants of some province, country or kingdom,”⁵ the word was more objective and limited to geography, while lacking the idea of identity and consciousness of belonging to a group.⁶ Despite this more empirical meaning, Juan Pablo Fusi maintains that the concept of a Spanish people and nation, although vague and abstract, already existed in the Middle Ages:

It was articulated from the 13th [century] on [...] in works like the *Estoria de España* commissioned by Alfonso x, the *Chronicon Mundi* by bishop Lucas de Tuy and the *Historia Gothica* by Toledan bishop Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada. The idea of a historic entity or “Spanish” nation (originated under the Visigoth monarchy: the gothicist thesis already mentioned) was in the works of many Castilian authors of the 15th century: in the *Compendiosa historia hispánica*, 1470, by Rodrigo Sancho de Arévalo, in the *Crónica abreviada*, 1482, by Diego de Valera, in the [works of the] Catholic Monarchs’ official historians (Andrés Bernaldez, Alonso de Santa Cruz, Fernando del Pulgar), even in non-Castilian authors like Joan Margarit, cardinal from Girona [and] author of *Paralipomenon Hispaniae* and the chronicler Pere Tomic, author of *Histories e conquestes dels Reys de Arago e Comtes de Barcelona* (1495).⁷

5 *Diccionario de autoridades: Nuevo diccionario histórico del español*, 1st ed. (Madrid: 1726–1739).

6 The popular Spanish fictional author and journalist Arturo Pérez-Reverte identifies the open and accepted relationships between Christians and Muslims as proof of an ambiguity with regard to the term ‘nation’ at the time: “Proof that at the beginning [during the Middle Ages] of the Reconquista thing the words ‘nation’ and ‘homeland’ were not clear yet is that, for centuries, alliances and flirtations between Christians and Muslims were frequent, with mixed marriages and hidden cohabitations, to the extreme that many kings and emirs from one side or another had Muslim or Christian mothers; not slaves, but rather arranged in marriage in exchange for alliances and territorial advantages” (“Prueba de que al principio [durante la Edad Media] de la cosa reconquistadora [...] las palabras nación y patria no estaban claras todavía es que, durante siglos, fueron frecuentes las alianzas y toqueteos entre cristianos y musulmanes, con matrimonios mixtos y enjuagues de conveniencia, hasta el extremo de que muchos reyes y emires de uno y otro bando tuvieron madres musulmanas o cristianas; no esclavas, sino concertadas en matrimonio a cambio de alianzas y ventajas territoriales”). Although not a historian by trade, Pérez-Reverte’s recent articles and book on the history of Spain are widely read, and his ideological opinions have contributed to many Spaniards’ understanding and perception of their nation’s past (Arturo Pérez-Reverte, *Una historia de España* [Barcelona: 2019], 33).

7 “Se articuló a partir del siglo XIII [...] en obras como la *Estoria de España* mandada componer por Alfonso x, el *Chronicon Mundi* del obispo Lucas de Tuy y la *Historia Gothica* del arzobispo toledano Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada. La idea de una entidad histórica o nación

Adrian Hastings agrees that nations existed in the Middle Ages, with England being the first mature one. This author identifies religion as the central element of a nation, with the ability to read and write and possession of a common language as other vital components.⁸

Today *nation* has a more socially oriented meaning and is used to signify a group of people that not only occupy a determined territory but also share the same government, language, history, and traditions. In addition, they are conscious of being a determined group. Within this socially oriented concept, one can differentiate between a 'civic nation,' formed around a political community, and an 'ethnic nation,' based on a common descent.⁹ The term *nationalism* denotes the feeling of identification individuals possess with the communities where they were born, which serves as a source of legitimacy and generator of loyalty toward a nation-state.¹⁰

According to the majority of historians who specialize in the study of the nation, the concept as we understand it today was not born until the 18th century. Karl Renner, a Marxist intellectual (1870–1950), identifies the French Revolution as the "birthday of the political idea of the nation and the birth-year of this new consciousness."¹¹ After this and other liberal revolutions (1776–1830), "nationalism imposed its ideas as a lay substitute that redirected loyalty

'española' (originada bajo la monarquía visigoda: la tesis 'goticista' ya aludida) estaba en la obras de muchos autores castellanos del xv: en la *Compendiosa historia hispánica*, 1470, de Rodrigo Sancho de Arévalo, en la *Crónica abreviada*, 1482, de Diego de Valera, en los historiadores oficiales de los Reyes Católicos (Andrés Bernáldez, Alonso de Santa Cruz, Fernando del Pulgar), incluso en autores no castellanos como el cardenal gerundense Joan Margarit, autor de *Paralipomenon Hispaniae* y el cronista Pere Tomic, el autor de *Histories e conquestes dels Reys de Arago e Comtes de Barcelona* (1495)" (Juan Pablo Fusi, *Historia mínima de España* [Madrid: 2012], 76).

8 Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism* (Cambridge: 1997).

9 Anthony Smith, *National Identity: Ethnonationalism in Comparative Perspective* (Reno: 1993), 8–15.

10 José Álvarez Junco, *Mater Dolorosa: La idea de España en el siglo XIX* (Madrid: 2001), 12; Andrés de Blas Guerrero, *Nacionalismos y naciones en Europa* (Madrid: 1994), 16. Blas Guerrero distinguishes between the traditional concept of nationalism, which is political in nature, and cultural nationalism. This Spanish scholar explains how, unlike political nationalism, cultural nationalism is defined by commitment and emotion and celebrates the nation as an objective in itself. Political nationalism, on the other hand, is objective and logical and serves as an instrument at the government level (Blas Guerrero, *Nacionalismos y naciones en Europa*, 16).

11 Karl Renner, "Staat und Nation," *Res Publica: Revista de Historia de las Ideas Políticas* 25 (1990): 109–24; quoted in Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (Cambridge: 1990), 89.

towards a new image: the nation.”¹² However, Blas Guerrero argues that the beginnings of a political organization resembling a nation-state were already perceptible before the 18th century.¹³

2 The Theory That Isabel and Ferdinand Founded Spain: Ideas of the Franco Regime

With the 1936 *coup d'état* and the Civil War that followed it (1936–1939), General Francisco Franco put an end to the government of the Second Republic in Spain. The Second Republic was characterized by its progressive and liberal ideology. The dictatorship that Franco instated (and that lasted for the following 36 years) assumed the mission of eliminating the development of the autonomous communities and regional languages – two elements which the Second Republic, with its more tolerant ideas, had encouraged.

At the same time, one of the main objectives of the Franco regime was promoting the idea of a single and unified Spain. To justify this campaign, Franco resorted to the Catholic Monarchs, affirming that his strong and united country dated back to their reign. As proof of this argument, Franco's regime fostered not only the idea that Isabel and Ferdinand unified Spain but also that they were two ideal monarchs chosen and guided by God, whose union was the result of fate. With destiny and years of history backing his campaign, Franco sought to generate a nationalistic feeling among the Spanish people by linking himself to Isabel and Ferdinand.

The reign of Isabel, during which the country thrived, was synonymous with the concept of “Eternal Spain,” which Hans-Jörg Neuschäfer defines as “backward [conservative, better yet], clinging to the imperial past and the counter-reformist tradition.”¹⁴ At the heart of the Catholic Monarchs' legend promoted by Franco was this nostalgic celebration of a Spain united by Catholicism and driven by an imperial destiny. After all, it was under Isabel that Spain ‘discovered’ America, expanding as an empire and acquiring riches and prestige. It was also Isabel who secured the authority of Catholicism in the Peninsula

12 Ramón López Facal and Jorge Sáiz Serrano, “Spain: History Education and Nationalism Conflicts,” in *Teaching History and the Changing Nation State: Transnational and International Perspectives*, ed. Robert Guyver (London: 2016), 201.

13 Andrés de Blas Guerrero, *Cuaderno y debates: Sobre el nacionalismo español* (Madrid: 1994), 14.

14 Hans-Jörg Neuschäfer, *Adiós a la España eterna: La dialéctica de la censura* (Barcelona: 1994), 12.

by bringing the *Reconquista* to an end, expelling the Jews, and creating the Inquisition. Carlos V, who reigned from 1516 to 1556, maintained the defense of Catholicism in Spain by means of the Counter-Reformation, which lasted through the 18th century.

By interpreting the Spanish past as exclusively Christian – and Spain as divinely ordained for universal empire – Isabel, her chroniclers and her poets drew on yet another specifically Spanish tradition rooted in Isidore of Seville's version of "Holy Mother Spain, glory and ornament of the earth, home of the famed and fecund race of Goths."¹⁵ This clergyman and scholar argued that the Goths were superior to the Romans and were "divinely destined for greatness."¹⁶

Religion was at the heart of Franco's promotion of the idea of a unified nation. He utilized the concept of National Catholicism for his propaganda. This ideology fused the Spanish state with Catholic religion and allowed Franco to justify his control of all aspects of Spanish life including education, cultural productions, and social gatherings.¹⁷ Isabel – the symbol of a divine leader who successfully brought the *Reconquista* to an end by freeing Granada from Muslim control, expelled the Jews, implemented the Inquisition, and evangelized the American colonies – was at the core of National Catholicism.¹⁸

One way in which Franco communicated an association between his regime and that of the Catholic Monarchs was through Spanish coins minted during his rule. The first action Franco took against the Second Republic after becoming head of state was to declare all republican banknotes illegal.¹⁹ The regime began printing its own banknotes and in 1938 released a new *peseta* bill with a picture of the regime's coat of arms. This coat of arms strongly identified Franco's government with the Catholic Monarchs and the Spain believed to be unified under their rule.

15 Liss, "Isabel, Myth and History," 65.

16 Liss, "Isabel, Myth and History," 66.

17 Franco was infamous for his censorship of cultural products, particularly books and film. He removed or altered scenes in movies that were anti-Catholic or presented immoral behavior and banned material he considered contrary to the ideals of his regime.

18 So strong was the association between Isabel and the most holy leader responsible for expelling all untrue religions from Spain that in 1958, an archbishop of Valladolid began a campaign to canonize the late queen. (This was not the first attempt in history to declare Isabel a saint.) Although Franco was not linked to this initiative, it does reflect the popularity of the image of Isabel as a divine leader associated with his regime. For further discussion on this topic, see Neuschäfer, *Adiós a la España eterna*.

19 Javier de Santiago Fernández, "Utilización política y propaganda en el papel moneda español entre la II República y el primer Franquismo," *Gaceta numismática* 153 (2004): 23–44, at 29.



FIGURE 12.1 1938 *Peseta* banknote



FIGURE 12.2 1938 *Peseta* banknote (reverse side)

As we see in Figures 12.1 and 12.2, the crown pictured on the banknote was a perfect duplicate of the crown found on Isabel and Ferdinand's own coat of arms. An eagle (the animal associated with St. John) represented the religious element defended by both the Catholic Monarchs and, later, Generalísimo Franco. The same slogan of "One-Great-Free" used by Franco appeared on a band on both sides of the eagle's neck. Finally, a yoke and arrow constituted the bottom portion of the image.

The Catholic Monarchs used these personal symbols to refer to each other. According to the courtly love tradition popular during the Catholic Monarchs' reign, a courtly couple had to choose objects symbolizing each other's names. Fernando chose the *yugo* or yoke for *Y* or *I* of Isabel, which represented the mundane richness of love. For the *F* of Ferdinand Isabel adopted *flechas* or arrows, which conveyed his love of war and imposed order.²⁰ By placing these symbols on the bills, Franco emphasized his participation in the consolidation of a unified Spain established during the "glorious imperial times" of Isabel and Ferdinand.²¹

There was a clear cultural production during the Franco regime that furthered his exaltation of Isabel and Ferdinand and his identification with them. In the anonymous song titled "Isabel y Fernando" (1942), for example, the lyrics call for adoration of the Spanish flag, symbol of the spirit of Isabel and Ferdinand that lived on: "Of Isabel and Ferdinand – the spirit prevails – we will die kissing the sacred flag."²² The song evokes the grandeur and power of the Spanish nation of the past while inciting the modern Spain to rise again in glory: "Our glorious pain – once again must be – the powerful nation – that never stopped conquering."²³ Finally, the lines "With our arm outstretched – and forehead high – let us work united – in our sacred mission"²⁴ induced the unity of the Spanish people working together under Franco in a mission given by God himself to build up their nation. In this way, Franco linked the identification of the nation with Catholicism and the defense of religion with the *Reconquista*. By presenting the royal couple in this way, fascist iconography became a reference for centuries to follow that the king and queen were

20 Franco adopted these symbols and the myth of the Catholic Monarchs they represent from the Falangist ideology.

21 Carolina Corporales Leal, "Moneda y Guerra Civil española: Delitos monetarios," *Ab Initio* 1 (Madrid: 2011): 169–202, at 182.

22 "De Isabel y Fernando / el espíritu impera / moriremos besando / la sagrada bandera."

23 "Nuestra España gloriosa nuevamente ha de ser la nación poderosa que jamás dejó de vencer."

24 "Con el brazo extendido y la frente elevada, trabajemos unidos en la empresa sagrada."

prototype monarchs whose union was a result of love and destiny. Since the fruit of this perfect and predestined union was the unity of Spain, the latter also came to be linked to the idea of destiny.

Intellectuals from Franco's time helped the regime in its campaign by representing the Catholic Monarchs in their works as ideal rulers who unified Spain. As the title of his book suggests, in *Isabel la Católica: Fundadora de España* (1951), Cesar Silió Cortés²⁵ defended the thesis that Isabel founded Spain:

Isabel the Catholic performed the miracle of joining the disperse and shattered pieces that she encountered upon assuming power to found a great country. She did it with an insuperable art, but was able to do it because there existed a people capable of coming together and rising up.²⁶

Like many other writers and historians of his time, Silió Cortés described Isabel and Ferdinand as exemplary kings and individuals: Lady Isabel was an exceptional woman and queen who should be placed in the rare category of geniuses.²⁷ Perhaps the author's most audacious affirmation, which at the same time most clearly represents the *Franquistas'* mission to idealize the Catholic Monarchs as the founders of Spain, constitutes the final sentences of the book: "Nations cannot have a mother but we must proclaim that ISABEL THE CATHOLIC WAS THE FOUNDER OF SPAIN. That's how I titled the book, with those words, and that is how I end it."²⁸ Such insistence, however, might point to the fact that at that time, this idea was not easy to accept.

Another intellectual from the era of Franco, José Tudela,²⁹ reveals similar ideas about the Catholic Monarchs in his introduction to Palacio Rubios's *Tratado del esfuerzo bélico heroyco*, published in 1941:

25 César Silió Cortés was a right-wing politician and author from Valladolid. He supported the Franco regime, although he was wary of the dictatorship. Many conservative politicians and intellectuals of the time considered Franco the lesser of two evils (the other being socialism, or even communism) and therefore adapted to his regime.

26 "Isabel hizo el milagro de juntar y fundir en un gran pueblo los pedazos dispersos y desquiciados que halló al subir al trono. Lo hizo con arte insuperable; pero lo pudo hacer porque el pueblo capaz de concentrarse y elevarse existía" (César Silió Cortés, *Isabel la Católica: Fundadora de España* [Madrid: 1951], 424).

27 "Doña Isabel fue una mujer y una Reina de todo punto excepcional, y hay que catalogarla en la rarísima categoría de los genios" (Silió Cortés, *Isabel la Católica*, 422).

28 "Las naciones no pueden tener madre pero debemos proclamar que ISABEL LA CATÓLICA FUE FUNDADORA DE ESPAÑA. Así lo puse, como título, a la cabeza de este libro, y le termino con las mismas palabras" (Silió Cortés, *Isabel la Católica*, 425).

29 José Tudela (1890–1973) wrote many articles and books on ethnology and worked as a civil servant during Franco's regime.

The Catholic Monarchs' enormous undertaking – the greatest in Spanish history and one of the greatest that the centuries have seen – to raise up from the ruins, in a few years, a powerful nation; to forge the first modern State and lay the foundation for one of the greatest Empires that the world has seen, the Catholic Monarchs managed to do it [...].³⁰

At the same time as these intellectuals advanced the propagandistic agenda of Franco, Américo Castro (disciple of the philologist, historian, and member of the Generation of '98, Ramón Menéndez Pidal) "demolished the myth that Spain was a monocultural entity existing from time immemorial, its history a divinely destined unfolding" in the middle of the 20th century.³¹ Franco banned Castro's writings, as he did those of many liberal intellectuals in the Peninsula. Publishing in Mexico, Castro was the first scholar to recognize the multi-ethnic, culturally and religiously diverse Spain whose identity had been unjustly simplified. Interestingly enough, Menéndez Pidal's other great disciple, Dámaso Alonso, highlighted Spain's vital role in the development of European culture by maintaining that with *Don Quijote*, Cervantes created the new novel and established realism as the differentiating feature in Spanish literature.³² Dámaso Alonso's reading of *Don Quijote* preserved what he considered to be national values and Spain's soul. Through his study of Cervantes, Dámaso Alonso reaffirmed the idea of an Eternal Spain, great and unified.

3 Sources from the Past

Neither Franco nor the historians of his time were the first to convey this perception of the Catholic Monarchs. From the moment Isabel and Ferdinand assumed power in 1474 until today, there has existed a tendency to celebrate them as exemplary rulers and founding parents of the Spanish nation. López Facal and Sáiz Serrano explain that "[the exaltation of Spanish] [h]istory reached its height when the Catholic Monarchs [...] conquered Granada in

30 "En la ingente empresa llevada a cabo por los Reyes Católicos – la más grande de la historia de España y una de las mayores que vieron los siglos – de levantar de las ruinas, en pocos años, una nación poderosa; de forjar el primer Estado moderno y echar las bases de uno de los grandes Imperios que ha habido en el mundo, se valieron los Reyes Católicos" (Palacio Rubios, *Tratado del esfuerzo bélico heroyco* [Madrid: 1941], 8).

31 Liss, "Isabel, Myth and History," 68.

32 Fernando Rodríguez-Mansilla, "Dámaso Alonso lee el *Quijote*: Nación, realismo e intrahistoria en el cervantismo español," *eHumanista* 9 (2007): 175–95, at 176.

1492, finished the 'Reconquista' and restored the 'national unity' of Spain."³³ These scholars go on to explain how Rafael Altamira (1866–1951), the intellectual who guided the remodeling of historiography and pedagogy for the construction of the nation under Franco, used the criterion of the degree of political integration for justifying the past. According to Altamira, "the kingdom of the Catholic Monarchs [...] represents the 'crystallization of the national ideal' that put an end to medieval division."³⁴ Despite considering the decision morally unsound, he defended the expulsion of the Jews, since it helped solidify national unity.³⁵

Those who fomented this notion during Franco's rule had numerous sources at their disposal. Throughout their lives the Catholic Monarchs employed chroniclers like Alfonso de Palencia, Alonso de Santa Cruz, and the aforementioned Palacio Rubios, who documented their achievements as well as personal relationships. In theory, their memoirs served as official reports about the monarchs' lives. Yet there was another function that the chronicles carried out: propaganda.

The ideologized image of the Catholic Monarchs was also fostered through the iconography of their reign. The iconography produced during that period portrays them as a couple united by love and a strong will. One good example of this iconography is the image that appears in the *Carta de Privilegio de los Reyes Católicos al Colegio de Santa Cruz de Valladolid* (1475), which represents the king and queen as two attractive young lovers full of hope.

As we see in Figures 12.3 and 12.4, the two monarchs are looking intensely at each other in profile, holding each other by the forearm. Their facial expressions reveal a subtle smile that communicates enchantment, admiration, and fidelity. They are dressed in elegant clothes and jewelry, and (of course) wearing their crowns. By wearing crowns, Isabel and Ferdinand highlight their political identity. This way people associate them with their kingdoms, Castile and Aragon, and with the nascent entity of Spain, a result of their union. The knot that appears in the background symbolizes the idea that their union cannot be broken.

33 López Facal and Sáiz Serrano, "Spain," 202.

34 López Facal and Sáiz Serrano, "Spain," 204.

35 Through the 16th century the expulsion of the Jews was viewed as a positive action. Spain was one of the last politically cohesive European countries to exile them (France, England and several German towns had already done so in the Middle Ages.) Only countries whose territories were not consolidated under one central government, like Italy and Flanders, accepted them.



FIGURE 12.4 *Carta de Privilegio de los Reyes Católicos al Colegio de Santa Cruz de Valladolid* (detail)

In chapter LXXII of his chronicle, Santa Cruz describes the sadness felt by the Spanish people after the death of their queen, Isabel. He states that when she died, people cried, and understandably so: “Queen Isabel’s death caused such crying and sadness in the court and the Spanish cities that I could never do it justice trying to describe it. And it was understandable [that the people cried and were sad] since they had lost a Queen uniquely created by nature to govern her kingdoms.”³⁶ Santa Cruz continues to list Isabel’s qualities as a ruler, stating that she was chaste, honest, saintly, and fair. He also describes her as a loyal companion to her husband in addition to being generous with the nuns.³⁷

36 “Después de la muerte de la reina Doña Isabel, fue tanto el lloro y tristeza que dexó en la corte y en todas las ciudades de España, que en ninguna manera lo podré encarecer. Y con mucha razón, pues avían perdido una Reina que la natura no crió otra semejante para gobernación de sus reinos” (Alonso de Santa Cruz, *Crónica de los Reyes Católicos* [Seville: 1951], 304).

37 Santa Cruz, *Crónica de los Reyes Católicos*, 304.

He extends these praises to Ferdinand and finally to both as a couple: “[...] all of these virtues mentioned above were equally present in the Catholic King, her husband, in such a way that it seemed that God created them together so they could rule together [...] and although in two bodies, in one will and one single love.”³⁸

Many playwrights from the 16th and 17th centuries also represented this idea of the Catholic Monarchs in their works. Diane Fox notes that the king and queen became symbols of good governance in the 16th and 17th centuries.³⁹ Bravo Arriaga emphasizes the role of playwrights in this idealization process: “If the different arts, festivities and collective ceremonies ritualized the image of the monarch and the national values [...] it is the dramatic spectacle with which the Spaniard of that time period identified himself most.”⁴⁰

In his work *The Innocent Child of La Guardia* (published in 1617),⁴¹ Lope de Vega represents Isabel “as a woman obsessively committed to the unification of Spain under a Catholic hegemony.”⁴² *Fuente Ovejuna* presents the Catholic Monarchs as rulers who impart justice to the inhabitants of a town bearing the same name as the title of the play.⁴³ They have suffered the violent authority of their feudal *señor* Fernán Gómez, depicted as a tyrant. Arguably, by not punishing the villagers of Fuente Ovejuna for killing the abusive Gómez, Isabel and Fernando become heroes in the story and ‘legitimate’ rulers.⁴⁴

38 “[...] todas estas virtudes dichas no menos estar cumplidamente en el Rey Católico, su marido. De manera que parece averlos criado Dios juntos para que viviesen juntos y gobernasen juntos [...]. Y aunque en dos cuerpos, en voluntad y amor uno solo” (Santa Cruz, *Crónica de los Reyes Católicos*, 305). Although the couple was truly in love, there was tension in the relationship due to their different temperaments. Whereas Ferdinand was earthy, flexible, and even unfaithful, Isabel was devout, rigid, and chaste (Henry Kamen, *Una historia conflictiva: España, 1469–1714* [Madrid: 1984], 31).

39 Quoted in María Dolores Bravo Arriaga, “Protagonismo real y dramático de los Reyes Católicos, en especial de Isabel I,” in *Isabel la Católica y la política*, ed. Julio Valdeón Baroque (Valladolid: 2001), 409.

40 “Si bien las distintas artes, festividades y ceremonias colectivas ritualizaban la imagen del monarca y de los valores nacionales [...] es el espectáculo dramático con el que el español de la época se identifica de manera más profunda” (Bravo Arriaga, “Protagonismo real y dramático,” 409).

41 Lope de Vega, *El niño inocente de La Guardia* (Madrid: 1617).

42 Jesús Pérez-Magallón, “The Poetic and Dramatic Construction of Isabel la Católica in the Theater of Lope de Vega,” in *Isabel la Católica, Queen of Castile*, ed. Boruchoff, 196.

43 Lope de Vega, *Fuente Ovejuna*, in *Docena parte de las comedias de Lope de Vega Carpio* (Madrid: 1619).

44 Bravo Arriaga, “Protagonismo real y dramático,” 413.

Another of Lope de Vega's works, *El mejor mozo de España* (1627),⁴⁵ recreates the moments in which Isabel and Ferdinand meet, when they set their wedding date, as well as when they unify the two Kingdoms of Castile and Aragon. The drama reconstructs the battles the Catholic Monarchs fought in order to retake cities occupied by the Muslims and establish Catholicism as the exclusive religion of Spain. At the end of the play Isabel and Ferdinand appear, and Lope depicts an allegory of Castile that addresses them with these words:

Fernando heroic, Isabel divine,
Castile calls you:
may it be for good, and for
my good, the *lasso* that connects you,
in which the world awaits you
with the greatest feats
that have been written.⁴⁶

Traditionally, scholars like Menéndez Pelayo and Menéndez Pidal celebrated Lope de Vega's exemplification of national ideals.⁴⁷ In the 1950s, however, Américo Castro turned that perspective on its head. Subsequently, intellectuals such as Noël Salomon, José María Díez Borque, and José Antonio Maravall began to question the comedies represented on stage and the socioeconomic reality of the time, while uncovering the propagandistic function of theater used as a tool by the state.⁴⁸

The 19th century saw an abundance of laudatory works on Isabel, some of which made a case for her canonization. Catholic clergymen, conservative historians (many of whom belonged to the Royal Academy of History), scholars, thinkers, poets, playwrights, and authors both Spanish and foreign sang Isabel's praises in letters, articles, speeches, poems and prose. A few names of

45 Lope de Vega, *El mejor mozo de España* (Madrid: 1627). For further discussion of this play, see the chapter by Edward Friedman in this volume.

46 "Fernando heróico, Isabel divina, Castilla os llama: / para bien sea, y por bien / mio, el lazo que os enlaza, / en que os espera ya el mundo / con las mayores hazañas / que se hayan escrito en él" (Lope de Vega, *El mejor mozo de España*, Acto III, quoted in Bravo Arriaga, "Protagonismo real y dramático," 420).

47 Lope created Spanish national theater by using "characteristically Spanish themes, values, and subject matter" ("Golden Age," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*). The traditional view is that thanks to his giving himself up to the national spirit, he achieved considerable fame (George Ticknor, *History of Spanish Literature*, vol. 2 [New York: 1849], 166).

48 Veronica Ryjik, *Lope de Vega en la invención de España: El drama histórico y la formación de la conciencia nacional* (Woodbridge: 2011), 2.

these admirers worth mentioning include Diego Clemencín, William Prescott, Modesto LaFuente, Washington Irving, Count Roselly, José Zorrilla, Ramón de Campoamor, Manuel Tamayo y Baus, and José Selgas.⁴⁹

One example of such tributes from the 19th century comes from the first president of Venezuela (1811–1812), Cristóbal Mendoza. Mendoza describes Isabel in his poetic tribute to her, *La gloria de Isabel la Católica* (1883), as a pure soul shining brightly amid the dark corruption at the palace of Enrique IV:

She maintained the purity of her soul, that shone more splendidly among the scenes of frivolity that surrounded her: so shines Venus with light among shadows, when the moon hides its silvery visage.⁵⁰

This author goes on to describe the state of the nation at the end of Enrique IV's rule: "The nation oppressed, the treasury dilapidated, the justice system a mockery, the currency adulterated [...]." ⁵¹ He dedicates the rest of his essay to praising Isabel extravagantly for not only solving all of Spain's problems but also expanding its influence and raising it to a level of purity and greatness never before achieved. Such an elaborate homage, although common in the 19th century (particularly among conservatives), is significant in this case, given that Mendoza was a strong supporter of the independence of Latin American republics from the Spanish crown.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that many scholars have compared Isabel to Queen Elizabeth I of England. Prescott identifies multiple characteristics the two women rulers in patriarchal worlds shared, beginning with their childhood and the circumstances in which they ascended to the throne, continuing with their long and glorious reigns that brought their respective countries to a new level of prosperity, culminating in their deaths – both victims of physical ailments and bouts of melancholy – and finally (perhaps most importantly), the illustrious legacy they both left behind.⁵² Despite all they had in common,

49 See Vicente Rodríguez Valencia (ed.), *Isabel la Católica en la opinión de españoles y extranjeros: Siglos xv al xx* (Valladolid: 1970) for their works, as well as a comprehensive collection of opinions about Isabel by Spanish and foreign individuals from the 15th through the 20th centuries.

50 "[Ella] mantuvo incontaminada la pureza de su alma, que brilló más espléndida entre las escenas de liviandad que la rodeaban: tal brilla Véspero con lumbre entre las sombras, cuando la luna oculta su faz argentada" (Cristóbal Mendoza, *La gloria de Isabel la Católica* [Caracas: 1949], 6–7).

51 "Oprimida la nación, dilapidado el tesoro, escarnecida la justicia, adulterada la moneda [...]" (Mendoza, *La gloria*, 6–7).

52 William Prescott, *Isabel la Católica en la opinión de españoles y extranjeros: Siglos xv al xx*, ed. Vicente Rodríguez Valencia (Valladolid: 1970), 115.

as this scholar states, their differences exceed their similarities. These included their personalities, level of education, etiquette, marital status (Elizabeth I never married) and intensity of religious devotion.⁵³

4 The Myth of Isabel in Other Times of Crisis

Summoning the image of Isabel was a way to restore the people's feeling of pride, confidence, and enthusiasm for the Spanish state in moments of doubt or crisis. Franco was not the first ruler to use her image to this end. Much before his time, in the 17th century, the decline of the Spanish Empire brought a sense of shame to its people. This was compounded by the Black Legend (*Leyenda Negra*) or anti-Spanish propaganda created by European writers in the 16th century to diminish the prestige and influence of Imperial Spain during its Golden Age.⁵⁴ Spaniards bore the reputation of being proud, even arrogant. After all, the sun never set on the Spanish Empire.

A sense of superiority, grandeur, and fixation on appearance was not limited to the nobility, as evidenced by the following excerpt from Baltasar Gracián's novel *El Criticón* (1653):

Arrogance, first in every bad thing, took the lead. It stumbled upon Spain, first province of Europe. It seemed so similar in temperament, that it perpetuated itself in her. There it lived and there it ruled with all its allies: esteem for oneself, disdain for others, wanting to run everything and serve no one, it acts like Don Diego and "I come from the Goths," showing off, standing out, praising oneself, talking a lot, loudly and

53 Prescott, *Isabel la Católica*, ed. Rodríguez Valencia, 115.

54 The Black Legend has persisted to the present day as Spaniards continue to feel a sense of shame regarding their ambitious past, marked by events that were arguably positive but over time have been portrayed in an undesirable light. Some examples are conquering foreign lands and colonizing the Americas, but also episodes with more objectively adverse outcomes including the Inquisition, The War of Flanders, and the defeat of the Spanish Armada. Anti-Spanish stereotypes have given rise to a popular figure in the Italian *commedia dell'arte*. In theatrical works of this genre (16th-19th centuries) Spanish characters' names such as Il Capitano, Il Capitano Spavento, Sangre y Fuego, Matamoros, Crocodilos, and Rajabroqueles poked fun at their bravado (Roca Barea, *Imperiofobia y leyenda negra: Roma, Rusia, Estados Unidos y el Imperio español*, 8th ed. [Madrid: 2017], 146). One famously parodied Spanish figure in modern American cinema is Íñigo Montoya from *The Princess Bride* (1987), known for the phrase he repeats gallantly throughout the film: "My name is Íñigo Montoya. You killed my father. Prepare to die."

hollowly, importance, pomp, exuberance, with all type of presumptuousness, and all that from the nobleman to the commoner.⁵⁵

Under Felipe IV the Conde-Duque de Olivares invoked the Catholic Monarchs as a way to regain the people's faith in the monarchy. The political treatises of Francisco de Quevedo and Baltasar Gracián also described the ideal government as being like that of the Catholic Monarchs. Joseph Pérez confirms that "the image and memory of Ferdinand and Isabel, of Ferdinand more than Isabel [...] dominates the 16th and 17th centuries until it becomes a true myth."⁵⁶

The Generation of '98 manifested a similar reaction to the crisis that occurred at the end of the 19th century. Faced with the economic, political and social implications of the loss of the last Spanish colonies, scholars searched for consolation by returning to the roots of the 'Spanish soul,' studying the *Cantar de Mio Cid* and the construction of the epic genre in Castile.⁵⁷ Even today, while Spain still suffers from recession following the 2008 crisis, the myth of Isabel has been resurrected as a means of encouraging the Spanish people by reminding them of their important past. The 2012–2014 television series titled *Isabel* was broadcast on a public Spanish network (Televisión Española or TVE).⁵⁸ As Rodríguez-Mansilla explains:

Isabel refers to a period that for the authors of the Golden Age had been "Spain's best moment," in contrast with the times of economic crisis and

55 "La soberbia, como primera en todo lo malo, cogió la delantera. Topó con España, primera provincia de Europa. Parecióla tan de su genio, que se perpetuó en ella. Allí vive y allí reina con todos sus aliados: la estimación propia, el desprecio ajeno, el querer mandarlo todo y servir a nadie, hace el don Diego y vengo de los godos, el lucir, el campear, el alabarse, el hablar mucho, alto y hueco, la gravedad, el fausto, el brío, con todo género de presunción, y todo esto desde el noble hasta el más plebeyo" (cited in Ricardo García Cárcel, *Las culturas del Siglo de Oro* [Madrid: 1999], 206). In this excerpt we witness the fall of the *hidalgo*, or nobleman who did not have to pay taxes, who appears in *Lazarillo de Tormes* (1554) in the form of a character who has no money but dresses very meticulously before leaving his house in order to maintain the appearance of wealth. This canonical example of a literary cliché is based on a real socioeconomic problem of the time.

56 "[L]a imagen y la memoria de Fernando e Isabel, de Fernando más que de Isabel, como veremos, domina los siglos XVI y XVII hasta convertirse en verdadero mito" (Joseph Pérez, "La memoria de los Reyes Católicos en los siglos XVI y XVII," in *La imagen de Fernando el Católico en la Historia, la Literatura y el Arte*, ed. Aurora Egido and José Enrique Laplana Gil [Zaragoza: 2014], 119).

57 Rodríguez-Mansilla, "Dámaso Alonso," 176.

58 For a discussion of this TV series see the chapter by Emily Francomano in this volume.

international conflicts that happened following the discovery of America and the beginning of the Austrian Dynasty.⁵⁹

Presenting a young Isabel fighting her way through a male-dominated world – a woman who is intelligent, strong, and unwavering in her beliefs – this feminist depiction offers us a new, positive, modern, and engaging image of the queen.⁶⁰

5 Reality or Myth?

As we have seen, many sources defend the idea that Isabel and Ferdinand are the founding parents of the Spanish Nation. Yet how do we know if these testimonies are veracious or simply part of a popular trend to idealize the monarchs? Peggy K. Liss began the original 1992 edition of her monograph *Isabel la Católica* with a warning that “[t]his story about Isabel does not offer the known image of the perfect queen that unified Spain.” With this statement, Liss implies that the tendency in works about the Catholic Monarchs has been, until now, to romanticize the couple and their reign.

The Spanish historian Ladero Quesada also advises us about the continuous mystification of Ferdinand and Isabel’s accomplishments: “The singular importance of that reign and what took place during it have produced, without a doubt, a continuous flow of mythification.”⁶¹ He continues on to say that with

59 “*Isabel* remite a una época que ya para los autores españoles del Siglo de Oro había sido ‘el mejor momento de España,’ en contraste con los tiempos de crisis económica y conflictos internacionales que se sucedieron tras el descubrimiento de América y el inicio de la dinastía austríaca” (Fernando Rodríguez-Mansilla, “La picaresca en *El ministerio del tiempo*,” *Imposibilia* 10 [2015]: 74–96, at 76).

60 The follow-up series on Charles V failed to attract the same viewership. According to Rodríguez-Mansilla its failure was most likely due to two factors: first, the protagonist was a man. In a time where the depiction of female protagonists and their success in a male-dominated world is popular, this fundamental aspect made it less attractive right from the start. Second, it depicted a ruler who conquered lands and people beyond Spain. This supranational element of Spanish history often evokes a feeling of shame in Spanish people today. Associated with Franco and being *facha*, celebrating Spain’s glory days of the Golden Era is considered poor taste among progressive Spaniards. Moreover, ‘Imperial Spain’ is now associated with the extreme right, in particular the political party *vox* (Rodríguez-Mansilla, private interview [Geneva: 14 November 2019]).

61 “La importancia singular que, sin duda, tuvo aquel reinado y la trascendencia futura de muchos sucesos que ocurrieron en él, han producido un continuo flujo de mitificación” (Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada, *Los Reyes Católicos: La corona y la unidad de España* [Valencia: 1989], 20).

the methodological and critical tools at our disposal today, it would be absurd to insist on staying within the circle of clichés (many of which are false) that exist about the Catholic Monarchs.

Is the affirmation that Isabel and Ferdinand forged the Spanish nation in fact a simple myth? In accordance with our modern-day definition of 'nation' as a group of people that occupies a determined territory and shares the same government, language, history, and traditions, as well as being conscious of their identity as a determined group, we will now look for signs of the existence of a nation during the time of the Catholic Monarchs.

6 Territorial Circumstances of Spain: Crowns, Kingdoms, and Principalities

Through their marriage in 1469 Isabel, Queen of Castile, and Ferdinand, Prince of Aragon, united the Kingdoms of Castile and Aragon. However, it was not until 1474 – after the death of Isabel's brother King Enrique IV – that Isabel was proclaimed queen in Segovia. The following year she and Ferdinand officially agreed upon their equality of rights over the two kingdoms in the *Concordia de Segovia*.⁶² Ferdinand left Aragon to go to Castile, the more powerful and extensive of the two realms,⁶³ and from there the two governed jointly.

In 1492 the Castilian Crown consisted of three different historical kingdoms: Galicia, Toledo, and Andalusia (which included the Kingdom of Granada after it was conquered in 1492). Also comprising Castile were the principalities of Asturias, Castile and Leon, Extremadura, and Murcia.

The Aragonese Crown, with Saragossa as its capital, was composed of the Kingdoms of Aragon and Valencia, as well as the territory of Catalonia.

In addition to the Castilian and Aragonese Crowns, there was also the Kingdom of Navarre, which included Ultrapuertos to the north of the Pyrenees and had its capital in Pamplona.⁶⁴

62 Julio Valdeón Barunque, *Isabel la Católica y la política* (Valladolid: 2001), 387. Officially, their joint reign began at the end of 1474 in Castile and at the beginning of 1479 in Aragon (Ladero Quesada, *Los Reyes Católicos*, 36).

63 Castile was four times the size of Aragon (Kamen, *Una historia conflictiva*, 35).

64 Ladero Quesada, *Los Reyes Católicos*, 39.

7 Common Borders

By the end of the Catholic Monarchs' rule, the boundaries of Spain were well-defined – so well-defined, in fact, that, as Álvarez Junco emphasizes, they matched up almost perfectly with those of today: “[The Catholic Monarchs] reunited in their heads most of the peninsular crowns in order to form a monarchy whose borders coincide almost perfectly with those of the current Spain.”⁶⁵

Probably the most important factor in determining the Spanish borders was the *Reconquista* or re-conquering of Spanish territory from the Muslims. Although the *Reconquista* had begun before the Catholic Monarchs started to rule in 1474, they were the ones who finally brought the long conflict to an end, expelling the Muslims from the Kingdom of Granada in 1492. According to Andrés de Blas Guerrero, the *Reconquista* is seen as the historical moment in the definitive shaping of Spain.⁶⁶

Another decisive action that helped delineate Spain's borders was Isabel's decree that her grandson Charles I must live within Spain if he wished to inherit the throne. Isabel specifies in her will that after she dies, her daughter Juana will succeed her. However, if Juana leaves “the kingdoms,” does not want to or cannot reign, then Ferdinand shall rule. If this is the case, Ferdinand will govern until Juana's son and their grandson, Charles, is old enough to ascend to the throne:

I order that at such a time and whenever the princess mentioned above, my daughter, is not in my kingdoms mentioned above, or after she comes to them, if at some time she has to leave or be away from them, or being in them and not wanting to or not being able to govern them, in any of these cases, the King my lord will reign, administer and govern the kingdoms and lords and have the government and administration of them by the princess mentioned above, as I have said, until the prince Don Carlos, my grandson, first-born of the mentioned prince and princess Don Phillip I and Doña Juana, is of the legal age, at least 20 years old, in order to reign and govern, being of the mentioned age, being in my kingdoms at that time or coming to them in order to reign.⁶⁷

65 “[Los Reyes Católicos] reunieron en sus cabezas la mayoría de las coronas peninsulares para formar una monarquía cuyas fronteras, además, coincidían casi a la perfección con las de la actual España” (Álvarez Junco, *Mater Dolorosa*, 45).

66 Blas Guerrero, *Nacionalismos*, 27.

67 “Ordeno e mando, que cada e quando la dicha princesa, mi hija, no estouiere en estos dichos mis reynos, o despues que a ellos veniere, en algund tienpo aya de yr e estar fuera

Given that at that moment in history it was not rare for a king of one country to live in another or to reign over a territory that he never visited, Isabel's proclamation that it was necessary for the monarchs who succeeded her to live in Castile was very significant in that it created the idea of a proto-nation in which the monarch would inhabit the land he governed.

In the case of Isabel's Spain, the limits of that territory were both politically and psychologically clear. It is important to note, however, that at that time there did not exist a consciousness of Spain as a united entity. "My kingdoms," as Isabel referred to them and as the people interpreted them, referred above all to Castile and its territories, including the American colonies.

8 Political and Economic Situations in Spain

The existence of a common governmental system is another integral part of the definition of a nation. What was the political situation within those borders following the unification of the two crowns? As we shall see, Castile and Aragon maintained completely separate administrative and legal establishments. It was common practice in the Middle Ages for monarchies to annex territories without modifying their existing institutions or, more precisely, without implementing their own systems of government in the newly acquired countries. Nonetheless, it is important to examine the political makeup of each of these regions.

Within Castile, the kingdoms and principalities were almost more of a historical reference than real separate domains since they shared the same institutions established by the Castilian Crown. In this sense, the Castilian government was centralist. The two principal cities of Castile, Toledo and Valladolid, were home to the main institutions of the Crown of Castile. The *Audiencia Real*, for instance, which was the most important criminal court, was located in Valladolid. Likewise the *Consejo Real* – equivalent to a type of parliament – was in Toledo.

dellos, o estando en ellos no quisiere, o no podiere entender en la gouernaçion dellos, que en qualquier de los dichos casos, el Rey mi sennor rija, administre e goui/erne los dichos mis reynos e sennorios, e tenga la gouernaçion e administracion dellos por la dicha princesa, segund dicho es, fasta entanto que el ynfante don Carlos, mi nieto, hijo primogenito, heredero de los dichos prinçipe e prinçesa Don Felipe 1 e Donnia Juana, sea de hedad legitima, a lo menos de veynte annos cunplidos, para los regir e gouernar E seyendo de la dicha hedad, estando en estos mis reynos, a la sazon, e veniendo a ellos para los regir e gouernar" (Isabel 1, *Testamento y Codicilo de la Reina Isabel la Católica* [1504] [Madrid: 1969], fol. 5v).

Isabel and Ferdinand also established a common law for all Castilian inhabitants called *derecho público castellano*.⁶⁸ This common public legal code determined that the same laws must be applied to all Castilians regardless of social status, religion, etc. Likewise, the Catholic Monarchs implemented a system of popular representation in Castile. The residents of cities like Valladolid, Toledo, Burgos, Seville, and Granada elected local representatives who then remained in direct contact with the *Consejo Real*.⁶⁹ This idea of popular representation, considered innovative at that time, was conducive to a consciousness among the people that they were part of a group. This new set of laws, courts and representation in Castile constituted a justice system characteristic of a modern state.

The Aragonese Crown maintained its own system of government and institutions with respect to Castile. For example, the Cortes of Calatayud, Barcelona and Valencia celebrated sessions throughout 1481. Unlike the situation in the Castilian Crown, in the Aragonese Crown each one of the three kingdoms and their principalities maintained its own systems and institutions of governance.⁷⁰ Similarly, Aragon did not have the benefit of a common public law or the popular representation implemented in Castile.

One example of this division of governmental systems is the case of Antonio Pérez. Personal secretary and adviser to Phillip II, Pérez was arrested in 1579 for having murdered Juan de Escobedo, John of Austria's personal secretary, with Ana de Mendoza, Princess of Eboli and his supposed lover, as an accomplice. While Ana was exiled by Phillip II, Pérez escaped in 1590 to Aragon where he was not susceptible to the king's laws, which were the laws of Castile.⁷¹ This occurrence shows how the laws in Aragon and Castile were distinct and that neither the Castilian justice system nor the king ruling from Castile exercised authority within the Crown of Aragon.

Whereas Castile became more centralist under Isabel's reign, the Kingdom of Aragon continued to enjoy autonomy with regard to the capital of Saragossa. When the King of Aragon assumed the throne, he swore to uphold the current laws or *fueros*. He could not carry out any legislation without the consent of the states, or *brazos*.⁷²

68 Tarsicio de Azcona, *Isabel la Católica* (Madrid: 2002), 308.

69 Francisco Gómez de Mercado y de Miguel, *Isabel I, Reina de España y madre de América: El espíritu y la obra de la Reina Católica en su testamento y codicilo* (Madrid: 1943), 68.

70 Gómez de Mercado y de Miguel, *Isabel I*, 39.

71 Gregorio Marañón, *Antonio Pérez: El hombre, el drama, la época*, 3 vols, trans. Fernando Santos Fontenla (Buenos Aires: 1947).

72 Kamen, *Una historia conflictiva*, 37.

In addition to this political disjunction, financially the kingdoms remained independent. Despite their dynastic union, Castile's and Aragon's internal and external markets remained separate under Ferdinand and Isabel.⁷³ An example of this division is the financial repercussions of the discovery of America in 1492. After Columbus 'discovered' America, a project that was financed and carried out by Castile, the other kingdoms in Spain did not have the right to trade with the new continent. Castile reserved that right for itself, with Seville as its main port, carrying out all business from there. As Ladero Quesada points out, there was a duality between the Castilian Crown and the Aragonese Crown "due to historical and regional peculiarities, or due to political-institution heterogeneity."⁷⁴

9 Cultural Aspects of Spain: Religious Homogenization

A common religion is an integral part of the traditions and customs shared by the people of a nation. Isabel and Ferdinand helped unify the country religiously with their infamous Inquisition – a concept borrowed from the Romans and converted into an apparatus of the state – and their *Reconquista*. The Pope was so convinced by Isabel and Ferdinand's campaign to Catholicize their territories that he granted them the honorary title of *Catholic Monarchs*.⁷⁵ Despite the 1491 Treaty of Granada, in which Isabel and Ferdinand allowed Muslims to continue to practice Islam in return for their surrender, the rulers later decreed that Muslims and Jews must either convert to Catholicism or be expelled from Spain. Those who converted but continued to practice Islam (known as *moriscos*) were not always prosecuted under the Catholic Monarchs. One well-known case are the *moriscos* from Hornachos, Extremadura. These farm workers represented cheap labor, and in their rural environment were less conspicuous and therefore less of a cause for concern. The hundreds of Inquisitorial 'processes' brought against them were conveniently never pursued.⁷⁶

73 Gómez de Mercado y de Miguel, *Isabel 1*, 63.

74 Ladero Quesada, *Los Reyes Católicos*, 41.

75 Álvarez Junco, *Mater Dolorosa*, 313.

76 The monarchs claimed the *moriscos* could not be collaborating with the Turks, as part of a "fifth column," and used this as an excuse for not pursuing the processes. For later use of this phrase see Andrew C. Hess, "The Moriscos: An Ottoman Fifth Column in Sixteenth-Century Spain," *The American Historical Review* 74.1 (1968): 1–25. There were several analogous cases like the *moriscos* of Hornachos. But in 1609 the famous massive deportation of *moriscos* took place and even those living in small, rural towns were forced to leave

It seems, therefore, that the desire to homogenize the Peninsula religiously was not the only reason why Isabel and Ferdinand decided to expel the Muslims and the Jews. Economic and political factors most likely played a role as well in their decision. Nonetheless, the religious element that permeated all their choices and infused their identity created cohesion among the Spanish people.

10 Common Language

A common language is another fundamental characteristic of a nation. In addition to advancing the religious unification of the country, Isabel and Ferdinand also oversaw linguistic standardization. Castilian Humanist Antonio de Nebrija published the first Spanish grammar, *Gramática de la lengua castellana* (1492). As Nebrija wrote in his grammar's prologue, "Language has always been a companion of Empire."⁷⁷ Here, however, Nebrija was not referring to Castilian, but rather to Latin. With its ecclesiastical nature, Latin was the cornerstone of the *res publica christiana*.⁷⁸ Nebrija was interested in supplying his fellow citizens with the tools to access a superior level of intellect and culture. Teaching them the grammar of the language they spoke on a daily basis and that served as a *lingua franca* for commerce and to record historical events of the kingdom was only a means to an end: learning Latin.⁷⁹ For Nebrija, Castilian was not the language that would establish Spain's preeminence in the world,⁸⁰ as it was a 'vulgar' Romance language without any literary tradition.

Nonetheless, by formulating a written set of rules for Castilian grammar, Nebrija helped lay the groundwork for homogenization of the language of Castile,⁸¹ which would later become the common language throughout the

the Peninsula (Bartolomé Bennassar, *La España del Siglo de Oro*, trans. Pablo Bordonada [Barcelona: 2004], 305–08).

77 "que siempre la lengua fue compañera del imperio" (Antonio de Nebrija, *Gramática de la lengua castellana* [Salamanca: 1492]).

78 Lucia Binotti, "La lengua compañera del imperio": Observaciones sobre el desarrollo de un discurso de colonialismo lingüístico en el Renacimiento español," in *Las gramáticas misioneras de tradición hispánica (siglos XVI–XVII)*, ed. Otto Zwartjes (Amsterdam: 2000), 262.

79 Nebrija's grammar book worked in the same way as today's Olivia and Hill press series *English Grammar for Students of Spanish* (or French, Russian, Japanese, Chinese, Arabic, etc.) teaches English speakers the rules of their native tongue in order to facilitate their acquisition of a second language.

80 Binotti, "La lengua compañera del imperio," 262.

81 Another important work that helped cement Castilian as the *lingua franca* of the Peninsula is the *Treasure of the Castilian or Spanish Language* (*Tesoro de la lengua*

rest of the Peninsula. Nebrija also established a connection between the power of the state and the official culture, typical of nationalisms.⁸²

11 Consciousness of a Spanish Nation: Isabel's and Ferdinand's Perceptions of Spain

The territorial, political, and cultural circumstances, however, are not the only ingredients that make up a nation. There is one other fundamental part in its creation: possessing a consciousness of the existence of that unity. To begin with, Isabel and Ferdinand never used the word 'Spain' in their official titles. They considered themselves king and queen of a collection of kingdoms: "King and Queen of Castile, of Leon, of Aragon, of Sicily [...], counts of Barcelona."⁸³ Moreover, Isabel's will – drafted by Isabel on 12 October 1504, a little over a month before her death on 26 November – does not include the word 'Spain' or even 'state.' Nor does she mention the word 'Hispania,' which, as Spanish historian Álvarez Junco points out, is without a doubt the origin of the word 'España' or 'Spain.'⁸⁴ She refers to the territory over which she reigns as "my kingdoms":

[...] the apostle Santiago, singular and excellent father and patron of these my kingdoms and very marvelously and mercifully given to them by our Lord as special keeper and protector.⁸⁵

castellana o española) (Madrid: 1611) by Sebastián de Covarrubias, the first monolingual Spanish dictionary and also the first dictionary of a modern language.

- 82 Despite this consolidation of Castilian, the regional languages of Catalan, Basque, and Galician continued to be the primary languages of Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia, respectively. These languages were suppressed for many years during the Franco regime, but in recent years there has been a resurgence of interest in their preservation. Castilian was renamed *español* or Spanish and established as the principal language of Spain by Alfonso X. These days, however, more and more Spaniards refer to it as Castilian, the more politically correct term. One could venture to say that the underlying intention of this return to the old name is to assert that Spanish / Castilian is not the national language but rather only one of many regional languages which are equally important in value and prominence.

83 Kamen, *Una historia conflictiva*, 31.

84 Álvarez Junco, *Mater Dolorosa*, 52.

85 "[...] el apostol Santiago, singular e excelente padre e patron destos mis regnos e muy marauillosa e misericordiosamente dado a ellos por Nuestro Sennor por special guardador e protector [...]" (Isabel I, *Testamento*, fol. 1r).

At one point, while praising Fernando for having greatly expanded the Castilian territory, she refers to the kingdoms as “my kingdoms of Castile.”⁸⁶ Neither does Isabel refer to herself as Queen of Spain, but rather queen of each kingdom individually:

Consequently, everyone who reads this will should know that I, Lady Isabel, by the grace of God, queen of Castile, of Leon, of Aragon, of Sicilia, of Granada, of Toledo, of Valencia, of Galicia, of Mallorca, of Sevilla, of Sardinia, of Cordoba, of Corsica, of Murcia, of Jaen, of the Algarbes, of Algezira and of Gibraltar and of the Canary Islands, Countess of Barcelona, and Lady of Vizcaya and of Molina, Duchess of Athens and of Neopatria, Countess of Rosellon and of Cerdaña, Marquess of Oristan and of Goceano [...].⁸⁷

As Henry Kamen bluntly points out, “the marriage did not create, nor could create, a new united Spain. In the 15th century the word ‘Spain’ meant, like it had throughout all the Middle Ages, the collectivity of all the towns of the Peninsula,” which included modern-day Portugal.⁸⁸

In her will, Isabel did, however, highlight the expansion of Castile and the accomplishments achieved in Castile’s name during her reign, a choice which shows she was aware of a strong and united Castile:

And because of these great deeds indicated that the king my lord has done since the beginning of our kingdom, the royal Crown of Castile has grown so much, that we must give many thanks and praise to our Lord.⁸⁹

86 Isabel I, *Testamento*, fol. 6v.

87 “Por ende, sepan quantos esta carta de testamento vieren como yo Donna Isabel, por la gracia de Dios reyna de Castilla, de Leon, de Aragon, de Seçilia de Granada, de Toledo, de Valencia, de Galizia, de Mallorcas, de Seuilla de Cerdenna, de Cordoua, de/ Corçega, de Murçia, de Jahen, de los Algarbes, de Algezira e de Gibraltar e de las yslas de Canaria, condesa de Barçelona e sennora de Vizcaya e de Molina, duquesa de Athenas e de Neopatria, condesa de Rosellon e de Çerdania, marquesa de Oristan e de Goçeano [...]” (Isabel I, *Testamento*, fol. 1r).

88 Historian Diego de Valera (1412–1488) wrote: “[...] como quiera que Nuestro Señor vos aya dado [...] la monarchia de todas las Españas,” referring also to Portugal (Kamen, *Una historia conflictiva*, 31).

89 “E porque de los fechos grandes e sennalados de quell rey mi sennor Ha fecho desdel comienço de nuestro / reynado, la Corona real de Castilla es tanto augnmentada, que deemos dar a Nuestro Sennor muchas gracias e loores” (Isabel I, *Testamento*, fol. 6v).

Another factor that makes us question the theory that there existed an awareness of a unified state is the question of Ferdinand's actions after his wife's death. After she died, Ferdinand left Castile to return to Aragon, due to political tension; Castilians turned on him, claiming he was a foreigner and calling him "the old Catalan" (*el viejo catalán*) as an insult. The fact that he abandoned Castile – supposedly united to his kingdom of origin and essentially one and the same – makes us question the strength of this union as well as Ferdinand's own will to preserve it.⁹⁰

In 1506 Ferdinand, aware of Castile's rejection of him, married Doña Germana de Foix (King Louis XII's niece), with whom he signed an agreement specifying that the couple's heir would inherit the principalities comprising the Kingdom of Aragon. In the end this did not occur because the only child born to Doña Germana and Ferdinand died a few days after being born. However, Ferdinand's willingness to undo the union of the kingdoms he had supposedly worked so hard to achieve makes us question whether he was conscious of the existence of a unified state. Had he been aware of such a union, he would not have considered partitioning Aragon, half of that supposed union, since it would not have existed for him as something independent of, and different from, Castile. As Álvarez Junco observes, those who claim that Isabel and Ferdinand had the intention of creating a "national Spanish unity" do not take into account a clause from the contract for Ferdinand's second marriage:

Those who have presented the matrimonial policy of the Catholic Monarchs as a planned operation to achieve "national Spanish unity" forget to notice that one of the clauses of the marriage agreement between Ferdinand and the Princess (from Navarra) obliged him to tie his Aragonese kingdoms to the couple's eventual descendent, separating again what had cost so much to unify.⁹¹

90 It is important to remember that Ferdinand did not inherit Castile when Isabel died. The crown was passed directly to their daughter Juana; only if she were unable or unwilling to reign would Ferdinand assume the throne. It is logical, then, that Ferdinand left Castile after Isabel's death since he had no authority there, which is another indication that the two kingdoms were not unified.

91 "Quienes han presentado la política matrimonial de los Reyes Católicos como una operación planeada para alcanzar la 'unidad nacional española' olvidan advertir que una de las cláusulas del compromiso matrimonial de Fernando con la princesa navarra le obligaba a legar sus reinos aragoneses a la eventual descendencia de la pareja, separando así de nuevo lo que tanto había costado unir" (Álvarez Junco, *Mater Dolorosa*, 47).

12 Spaniards' View of Their Country

Just as important as the perception the Catholic Monarchs had of the lands they ruled is the Spaniards' own view of their homeland. Were the people of Spain in the late 1500s and early 1600s aware of the existence of a Spanish nation? Two key historical quotations reveal to us that rather than being conscious of Spain *per se*, Spaniards recognized the importance of Castile alone as the center of the monarchy.

The first is from the day of Isabel's death in November of 1504. The people of Valladolid showed their support for Princess Juana, who succeeded Isabel, by chanting in the town square: "Castile, Castile, for Queen Juana, our lady!"⁹² With this exclamation they celebrated the heir to the throne and therefore head of their territory, which they identified as Castile – not Spain.

Similarly, on the day when Ferdinand died in 1516, the people of Toledo cried in the streets: "Castile, Castile, for our prince and the queen our lady, long live the Holy Inquisition."⁹³ With these words the townspeople acknowledged the deceased rulers while showing approval for their religious campaign, the Inquisition. Just as when a ruler dies today, we recognize his service to his country, the Spaniards of the early 16th century acknowledged the goals Isabel and Ferdinand had accomplished in the name of Castile.

Both of these incidents of chanting in the streets illustrate how the Spanish people associated the Catholic Monarchs and their heir not with Spain or a Spanish nation, but with Castile. It is important to note, however, that it was a common practice in the Middle Ages for townspeople to exalt the figure of the king or queen as ruler of the territory they inhabited as their vassals. We see this represented in *Fuente Ovejuna*: the peasants do not propose to rid themselves of any ruler, but rather to substitute the abusive Fernán Gómez with the benevolent Catholic Monarchs.

13 Subsequent Rulers' Opinions of Their Realm

Another piece of historical evidence that makes us doubt the existence of a Spanish nation under the Catholic Monarchs lies in a memorandum the Count-Duke of Olivares wrote to King Phillip IV in 1624. In this letter, the Count-Duke – an equivalent of prime minister– advises Phillip IV to become

92 "¡Castilla, Castilla por la reina doña Juana, nuestra señora!" (Santa Cruz, *Crónica*, 304).

93 "¡Castilla, Castilla, Castilla, por el príncipe nuestro señor y por la Reina nuestra señora, viva la Santa Inquisición!" (Ladero Quesada, *Los Reyes Católicos*, 224).

king of all of Spain and not just of each individual region, as part of the imperial project “Union of Arms”:

Take on, Your Majesty, as the most important order of business of your Monarchy, making yourself King of Spain: what I mean, Sir, is that you should not content Your Majesty with being King of Portugal, of Aragon, of Valencia, [and] Count of Barcelona, but rather that you work and think with secret and mute advice, in order to subjugate these kingdoms that make up Spain in the same style and all following the same Castilian laws without any difference. [If] Your Majesty achieves this, he will be the most powerful Prince in the world.⁹⁴

The Count-Duke of Olivares wrote this letter to King Phillip IV after accompanying him on a trip to Catalonia to ask for money so that Castile – suffering from a grave economic crisis – could participate in the Thirty Years’ War. When the Catalanian *Cortes* refused to help the king, it became evident that the king did not have complete authority outside of Castile. Just as Isabel and Ferdinand did not reveal any consciousness of having forged an actual political, administrative, and economic union of their kingdoms, the Count-Duke of Olivares was aware that such a union was necessary in Spain.

In the 15th century, despite the dynastic union of Castile and Aragon established through Isabel and Ferdinand’s matrimony, the kingdoms and principalities of these two main ‘Crowns’ were politically, economically, and culturally heterogeneous. In addition, toward the end of Isabel’s and Ferdinand’s rule – and even more than half of a century later – there was no evidence of a consciousness of the existence of a Spanish nation. Fusi argues that it was not until the Bourbons in the 18th century (thanks to their centralized monarchy based on the French model) that the Spanish nation came into existence.⁹⁵ In fact, the Constitution of 1812 mentions the Spanish nation eight times and the term nation a total of 26 times. The first reference to the Spanish nation is found in the second sentence of the document:

94 “Tenga Vuestra Majestad por el negocio más importante de su Monarquía, el hacerse Rey de España; quiero decir, Señor, que no se contente Vuestra Majestad con ser Rey de Portugal, de Aragón, de Valencia, Conde de Barcelona, sino que trabaje y piense con consejo mudado y secreto, por reducir estos reinos de que se compone España, al estilo y leyes de Castilla sin ninguna diferencia, que si Vuestra majestad lo alcanza, será el Príncipe más poderoso del mundo” (Conde-Duque de Olivares, “Gran Memorial” [“Great Memorial”] [1624], Humanitates Cluny, Word Press (accessed 15 November 2019) [<https://humanitat.escluny.files.wordpress.com/2018/02/textos-3c2ba-eso-historia-siglos-xvii-y-xviii.pdf>]).

95 Fusi, *Historia*, 76.

The general and extraordinary Courts of the Spanish Nation, well convinced, after the most careful examination and mature deliberation of the ancient fundamental laws of this Monarchy, accompanied by the opportune providences and precautions that assure in a stable and permanent way their entire adherence, that they will be able to fill duly the great objective of promoting the glory, the prosperity and the good of all the nation, decree the following political Constitution for the good government and right administration of the State.⁹⁶

The Constitution was a liberal and inclusive initiative. The Spaniards invited representatives from the American territories to participate (although they arrived in the Peninsula after the document was finished and, as a result, were not able to offer their input).

14 The Spanish Nation Today

Although the Catholic Monarchs did not forge the Spanish nation, there is much evidence to support the assertion that the Catholic Monarchs created a Castilian state with well-defined and exclusive laws, institutions, financial markets, and language. This state later projected itself as the foundation for the Spanish nation. How can the creation of a Castilian state help us understand the problems faced by Spanish nationalism today?

Consolidated in the second half of the 19th century, the Spanish nation today is mature both politically and territorially.⁹⁷ However, as Blas Guerrero mentions, this nation is not free from the existence of other possible national realities of a cultural nature,⁹⁸ as demonstrated by the cases of Catalonia and the Basque Country. These peripheral nationalist movements seem to threaten the Spanish nation.

96 "Las Cortes generales y extraordinarias de la Nación española, bien convencidas, después del más detenido examen y madura deliberación, de que las antiguas leyes fundamentales de esta Monarquía, acompañadas de las oportunas providencias y precauciones, que aseguren de un modo estable y permanente su entero cumplimiento, podrán llenar debidamente el grande objeto de promover la gloria, la prosperidad y el bien de toda la nación, decretan la siguiente Constitución política para el buen gobierno y recta administración del Estado" (*Constitución política de la monarquía española* [Cádiz: 1812], Congreso de la República del Perú (accessed 1 October 2019) [<http://www4.congreso.gob.pe/historico/quipu/constitu/1812.htm>]).

97 Blas Guerrero, *Cuadernos*, 13; 25–28.

98 Blas Guerrero, *Cuadernos*, 13.

The Basque Country is home to the now-dissolved separatist group ETA (*Euskadi Ta Askatasuna*) that committed terrorist acts between the late 1960s and early 2000s throughout Spain as a means of pressuring the Spanish government to concede independence to their regions (which became autonomous communities under the Constitution of 1978). Catalonia's current demands are similar in nature. Catalonia seeks independence from Spain, although its movement uses political, rather than violent, means.

Thanks to the Constitution of 1978 many of the Spanish autonomous communities, including the Basque Country and Catalonia, have gained the right to speak their own language, collect their own taxes, establish their own laws and control their own education. The decentralization of the Spanish state has been a key factor in the regions' increased autonomy within Spain.⁹⁹ This strengthened role within the nation-state has been paralleled by an augmented role at the supranational level thanks to the creation and expansion of the European Union. The regions have benefited from greater influence and political legitimacy thanks to numerous channels of representation and decision-making powers that have opened up for them at the European level.¹⁰⁰

The right to control their own educational systems has played a key role in the growth of nationalistic feelings within the autonomous communities. For most of the past half century, children growing up in communities such as Catalonia and the Basque Country have been taught that the central government was an impediment to the expression of the identity and development of their regions, a version of history much different from what children learned under the Franco regime: "Franco's regime brutally eradicated the liberal tradition and imposed the traditionalist version, taking National Catholicism

99 In October 2016, Catalonia expressed strong anti-Franco sentiment by knocking down a statue of Franco outside the Born Cultural Center, which was hosting an exhibition about Franco's legacy (Ralph Minder, *The Struggle of Catalonia: Rebel Politics in Spain* [London: 2017], 58). Earlier that year, the Salamanca Papers incident caused similar protests. These were documents confiscated from Republicans during the Franco regime that in 2016 were returned to the families of their authors and owners after being kept in Spain's Civil War Archive in Salamanca for many years. Lawyer and historian Policarpo Sánchez believes that "Catalonia's bid to dismantle the archive was part of a vendetta, driven by 'ideological hatred' for Spain rather than by sympathy for the victims of Franco" (Minder, *The Struggle*, 55).

100 Iván Llamazares and Gary Marks, "Multi-level Governance and the Transformation of Regional Mobilization and Identity in Southern Europe, with Particular Attention to Catalonia and the Basque Country," in *Democracy and the State in the New Southern Europe*, ed. Richard Gunther, Paraskevas Nikiforos Diamandouros, and Dimitri Sotiropoulos (Oxford: 2006), 235–62.

as the core of its ideology [...]."¹⁰¹ It is important to point out the opportunism of the Catalan elite who adapted to the regime as a means of maintaining their privilege only to promptly and forcefully proclaim their anti-Franco position following his death.¹⁰² Today, Catalan and Basque language courses are mandatory in their respective communities. In many schools in Catalonia instructors teach four hours of Catalan language and only two of Castilian language per week, despite the mandate that they offer three hours of each.¹⁰³ In sum, after four decades of an education that emphasizes the importance of the autonomous community, it is not surprising that newer generations have strong nationalistic feelings towards their communities.

The Catholic Monarchs' creation of a Castilian state can help us understand the tension surrounding nationalisms in Spain today. With the ambitious Catholic Monarchs at its head, Castile – the largest, richest, and most powerful kingdom – adopted an expansionist policy, looking to absorb the other territories of Spain. Under the Catholic Monarchs, Castile expanded to include Granada, the Canary Islands and the islands of America.¹⁰⁴ But it did not absorb in the same manner other kingdoms in the Peninsula like Galicia, the Basque Country, and Catalonia, since they were not conquered and then annexed onto Castile like Granada. People of these regions (as well as those of the American colonies) were not forced to become Castilians, but rather maintained more of their own independence, although they did recognize the authority of the Crown of Castile. Given that there was no nationalistic discourse at the time, it was not seen as a necessity. As long as they expressed loyalty and paid taxes to Castile and followed its laws, they were left alone. A Galician or a Basque, having his own traditions, history, and language, never identified with the Castilian. Therefore, the construction of a supra-regional entity was necessary so that Castilians and non-Castilians could unite under a common identity without betraying their original regional identity. That supra-regional construction was Spain. The Galician could not feel Galician and Castilian at the same time; but he could feel Galician and Spanish at the same time.

101 López Facal and Sáiz Serrano, "Spain," 204.

102 Minder, *The Struggle*.

103 Antonio M. Yagüe, "Las escuelas catalanas deberán dar tres horas semanales en castellano," *El Periódico* (23 Sept 2016), accessed 17 November 2019 (<https://www.elperiodico.com/es/politica/20061208/las-escuelas-catalanas-deberan-dar-tres-horas-semanales-en-castellano-5408276>).

104 Isabel I, *Testamento*, fol. 1r.

The problem is that at the base of that Spanish nation-state lay, and continues to lie, the Castilian state created by Ferdinand and Isabel.¹⁰⁵ The Galicians or Catalans who consider themselves Spanish – in addition to being Galician and Catalan, respectively – are aware deep down that as Spaniards, they are really identifying themselves as Castilians. For these highly nationalistic communities, this is the crux of an inner conflict which they often manifest via rejection of Spanish identity and demands for autonomy or independence for their region. These demands, both verbal and violent, are also a way for the people of these regions to affirm themselves – that is to say, to remind the rest of Spain that they are different and (as some may argue in the case of Catalonia) better.

Anti-nationalists in Catalonia have identified the Catholic Monarchs as the root of the suppression of their identity as well as their economic problems in the past. As Cervera writes in the conservative Spanish newspaper *ABC*: “The reign of the Catholic Monarchs, with the subsequent union of the crowns of Aragon and Castile and Leon, is indicated by Catalan nationalism as the origin of all of Catalonia’s troubles.”¹⁰⁶ Nationalists claim that the region suffered great economic loss for centuries after Isabel and Ferdinand deprived it of the opportunity to trade with the Americas. This deed, coupled with the

105 Rodríguez-Mansilla identifies the representation of the current tension that exists between Castile and Catalonia in the television series *Isabel* (2012–2014): “En el capítulo XII de la primera temporada de *Isabel*, Fernando sugiere a su padre que no humille a los catalanes. ‘A vos os tocará acabar con esto [el problema catalán],’ le dice el anciano rey de Aragón. ‘A mí o a mis hijos,’ replica el monarca católico, entre risas. En el capítulo siguiente, el XIII, el padre de Fernando no deja de quejarse, nuevamente, de la intransigencia de los condes catalanes, a lo que su hijo le sugiere sosegar y negociar con ellos. Las referencias a la mala relación entre Cataluña y Aragón persiste a lo largo de la serie” (Rodríguez-Mansilla, “La picaresca,” 92). Silleras-Fernández points out that, despite being a drama series whose intention is not to objectively recreate history but rather to entertain audiences, *Isabel* leads spectators to believe that Castilian was the only language used in the Peninsula and even throughout Europe at that time, since characters of all different origins – including Catalans – always speak Castilian (“Versión [no] original,” 43). This scholar argues that the series reinforces the image of a past in which all things Castilian, including the language, predominated (“Versión [no] original,” 44). The Castilian accent is also favored in other current television series in Spain with a historical focus, such as *El Ministerio del Tiempo* (Rodríguez-Mansilla, “La picaresca,” 92).

106 “El reinado de los Reyes Católicos, con la consiguiente unión de las coronas de Aragón y Castilla y León, es señalado por el nacionalismo catalán como el origen de todos los males de Cataluña” (César Cervera, “Los Reyes Católicos, ‘el origen de todos los males de Cataluña’ para los nacionalistas,” *ABC* [3 September 2015], accessed 20 February 2022 [<https://www.abc.es/espana/20140914/abci-reyes-catolicos-catalanismo-odio-201409131240.html>]).

Inquisition, according to nationalist discourse, destroyed the Catalan economy and eroded its culture. Cervera, however, argues that commerce with the Americas was never an exclusive enterprise, and that many Catalonians traveled to Seville to trade. This writer also maintains that it was not until the 19th century that Catalans began blaming Castilians and the Catholic Monarchs for their financial troubles. In fact, their region's decline began before Isabel and Ferdinand's reign – between 1462 and 1472 – when Valencia overtook Barcelona as the most thriving city on the Mediterranean coast.¹⁰⁷

Fernández Álvarez maintains that Isabel and Ferdinand's 'Castilianization' of the monarchy affected Catalonia in other moments of history as well. It exacerbated, for instance, the great economic crisis of the 17th century, when inhabitants of Aragon felt left out of foreign commerce carried on by Castile.¹⁰⁸ Unmoved by the official propaganda that successfully influenced residents of Castile, Aragonese subjects focused their efforts on the defense of their kingdoms.¹⁰⁹ The problem went unresolved for centuries, while their resentment was passed down from generation to generation until this day.

Recently Catalan separatists have taken measures to erase any reference to the Catholic Monarchs in their community. In Barcelona in 2021, as part of the secessionist platform *Canviem Reis Catòlics*, the street dedicated to the Catholic Monarchs was renamed "Elisa Moragas i Badia" for a teacher and defender of children's rights.¹¹⁰ This initiative, first proposed by a group of pro-sovereignty residents, was supported by secessionist parties PSC, ERC (Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya), JxCAT (Junts per Catalunya), and Els Comuns, a now independent political party that was originally a conglomeration of existing parties formed by the mayor of Barcelona, Ada Colau.¹¹¹ Pro-nationalist parties PP, Ciudadanos and Barcelona pel Canvi (now 'Valents')

107 Cervera, "Los Reyes Católicos."

108 Manuel Fernández Álvarez, *Isabel la Católica* (Madrid: 2004), 539–540.

109 Fernández Álvarez, *Isabel la Católica*, 539–540.

110 Gonzaga Durán, "Barcelona quita a los Reyes Católicos su calle con el voto a favor de los socialistas," *OK Diario Cataluña* (7 September 2021), accessed 28 February 2022 (<https://okdiario.com/cataluna/barcelona-quita-reyes-catolicos-calle-voto-favor-socialistas-7752776>).

111 Since Colau became mayor in 2015, three other Barcelona street names referring to the history of the Peninsula as a nation have been changed with the support of separatists and the PSC: "Plaza de la Hispanidad" became "Plaza de Pablo Neruda"; "Avenida de Borbón" is now "Els Quinze" (a reference to the 15 cents that the ticket cost for the streetcar which made the route down that avenue at the beginning of the 20th century); and "Pascual Cervera y Topete," admiral and hero of the 1898 Spanish-American War, was changed to "Pepé Rubianes," a comedic actor known for his Hispanophobia.

opposed the change, claiming its only intention was to erase the history of the streets of the city and purge nationalist symbols, but they were outvoted.

Such demands from the regions continue today.¹¹² The nationalist movement in Catalonia has undergone a shift from the 'top-down' approach, where political parties fight for change, to 'bottom-up' initiatives led by the people. In 2010, after the Constitutional Court of Spain declared that several articles of the 2006 Statute of Autonomy were unconstitutional, protests throughout the Catalan region ensued. A massive manifestation in 2012 led Catalan president Artur Mas to call for elections, which resulted in the first-ever pro-independence majority. In 2014, a non-binding referendum deemed illegal by the Spanish government was held, resulting in 81 per cent of voters expressing their support of an independent Catalan state. Soon afterward the Catalan parliament passed a resolution to begin the process of independence. A new referendum – this time binding, but once again illegal according to the Spanish government – was held in 2017, in which 91 per cent of the people (although this represented only 30 per cent of registered voters)¹¹³ showed their support for independence. Parliament passed a resolution to create an independent republic, but their vote was proclaimed illegal by the Catalan Parliament's own lawyers for violating a ruling by the Constitutional Court of Spain.

Despite the role the masses have played in the last few years, the mainstream political parties with influence both in Madrid and in their home territories continue to form a vital piece of the independence movements. Pushback against pro-sovereignty initiatives in both regions has come not only from Madrid but also from other autonomous communities. Both the public and political elites have cited the recent decentralization of the state

112 Galicia, a more conservative and rural region with a strong tradition of migration, also boasts an important nationalist movement but lacks the following characteristics exhibited by the Catalan and Basque cases: "economic record of relative success compared with other Spanish regions in recent decades; historical tradition of self-government [...]; structure of the nationalist movement (a pragmatic mainstream party and more radical pro-independence forces); existence of party competition within the nationalist-autonomist camp as well as across a nationalist / unionist division; predominance of nationalist parties in regional government since the creation of the current State of the Autonomies; and the capacity on occasion to affect government formation or survival in Madrid" (Richard Gillespie, "Between Accommodation and Contestation: The Political Evolution of Basque and Catalan Nationalism," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 21.1 [2015]: 3–23, at 5). The particular characteristics of Galicia help explain the appearance of someone like Franco, who was both Galician and a Spanish nationalist.

113 If Catalonia held a legal referendum, the voter turnout would most likely be greater and more representative of public opinion.

as an impediment to economic recovery following the 2008 financial crisis.¹¹⁴ Junts per Catalunya¹¹⁵ and PNV (Euzko Alderdi Jeltzalea / Partido Nacionalista Vasco) are the mainstream nationalist parties for Catalonia and the Basque Country, respectively. Both parties often occupy enough seats in the Spanish Parliament to form coalitions with the two main parties, the more conservative Popular Party (PP) and the leftist Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE), thereby becoming an important voice in policy change. Although they have adopted different strategic plans, both parties share the demand that their regions be given the right to decide their political future and the opportunity to pursue direct representation within the European Union (EU).¹¹⁶

The ramifications of independence would affect not only the Spanish state but also the European Union. Representatives from Brussels have warned that seceding communities would be excluded from the EU, at least temporarily, which would bring financial and political consequences. Catalan law professor Arenas García argues that if Catalonia became an independent state, in order for it to be a part of the European Union, the member states would have to approve its incorporation – which would require, in the best-case scenario, years of negotiation.¹¹⁷ This scholar describes this prospect as “a scene of uncertainty and risk that is not justified or desirable.”¹¹⁸ Although PP has made “ideological efforts to reaffirm a Spanish nationalist discourse within the country,”¹¹⁹ no party has been as successful at profiting from that discourse as the VOX party. As journalist Ralph Minder explains, the clear victor of the 10 November 2019 Spanish elections was VOX, the new far-right nationalist party that represents a reactionary movement against Catalanism and appears to be thriving amidst the Basque separatist and Catalanian secessionist movements, respectively. Appealing to citizens who are tired of the conflict and wish to return to more stable times, VOX's leader Santiago Abascal has “tapped into a new nationalism in Spain.”¹²⁰ Ciudadanos is another important Catalanian

114 Gillespie, “Between Accommodation,” 6.

115 The previous leading nationalist parties were *Convergència i Unió* (CiU), founded in 1978 and dissolved in 2015, and *EAJ-PNV* (Euzko Alderdi Jeltzalea / Partido Nacionalista Vasco).

116 Gillespie, “Between Accommodation,” 4.

117 Rafael Arenas García, “Por qué Cataluña debería seguir siendo parte de España,” *The New York Times* (11 May 2017), accessed 25 February 2022 (<https://www.nytimes.com/es/2017/05/11/espanol/opinion/por-que-cataluna-deberia-seguir-siendo-parte-de-espana.html>).

118 Arenas García, “Por qué Cataluña.”

119 Gillespie, “Between Accommodation,” 7.

120 Ralph Minder, “Spain's Far Right Emerges as a Force by Tapping a New Nationalism,” *New York Times* (11 November 2019, accessed 13 November 2019) (<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/11/world/europe/spain-election-vox-abascal.html>).

party, with a nationalist (i.e. non-secessionist) platform. This center-right bloc has been successful both at the regional and national levels despite a sharp decline in recent elections.

During the transition to democracy and the autonomous communities' recuperation of their rights and expression of identity, many spoke of a post-national Spain or a "state of autonomous communities."¹²¹ With this new nationalism brought out by VOX, we no longer find ourselves in a post-national era. Steve Bannon, a former chief strategist to Donald Trump who is known for his effort to break up the European Union by promoting nationalist parties, was a self-proclaimed admirer of VOX. There is a resurgence of nationalist movements not only in Spain, but across Europe.

The origin of the problems faced by the Spanish nation and its regions today lies in the perception of the Spanish state – whose origin can be traced back, at least in part, to the Catholic Monarchs. Álvarez Junco explains how, in the 19th century, when difference of opinion was negatively viewed, the idea of efficiency and unity patented by the Catholic Monarchs was valued:

The existence of debate, of opposing positions, is seen in negative terms, while efficient management continues to be equated with the monarchy that unites the country, *par excellence* that of the Catholic Monarchs.¹²²

This author goes on to identify this historical obsession for national unity and harmony as the root of many conflicts in Spanish politics today:

It could be argued that this will end up being one of the problems of contemporary Spanish political culture, based – more than on respect for liberties and individual rights and on the development of institutions in which conflicts of interest are debated and solved – on myths of unity, harmony and collective redemption.¹²³

¹²¹ López Facal and Sáiz Serrano, "Spain," 207.

¹²² "La existencia de debate, las posiciones enfrentadas, son vistas en términos negativos, mientras que la gestión eficaz sigue asimilada a la monarquía, que une al país, por excelencia la de los Reyes Católicos" (Álvarez Junco, *Mater Dolorosa*, 95).

¹²³ "Podría sostenerse que este acabaría por ser uno de los problemas de la cultura política española contemporánea, basada, más que en el respeto a libertades y derechos individuales y en el desarrollo de instituciones donde se debatan y solventen los choques de intereses, en mitos de unidad, armonía y redención colectiva" (Álvarez Junco, *Mater Dolorosa*, 95).

In this sense, the myth of the Catholic Monarchs as leaders of a united and powerful nation has been at the same time the solution to certain problems in Spain and the cause of others. The Spanish constitution acknowledges the existence of autonomous communities and different nations as part of the greater Spanish nation-state. Yet given the existence of these multiple identities, issues of self-determination could depend on a further weakening in the historical equating of Spain as a nation with the old historical Castilian state.

15 Conclusion

Franco promoted the idea that Isabel created the Spanish nation while linking himself to the Catholic Monarchs for political reasons, just as in the 19th century and nowadays in the post-2008 crisis era, the summoning of a figure synonymous with a unified Spanish nation at the peak of its glory serves to encourage Spaniards to take pride in their past and faith in their government.

Under Isabel there existed a dynastic union of the Aragonese and Castilian Crowns that did not translate into a political, economic and cultural union. In fact, many argue that the concept of nation was not even developed until the 18th century and that there were no signs in Spain of a unified nation until the 19th century. Fernández Álvarez insists that “one of the most deceptive aspects of the History of Spain in modern times is that its supposed unity is a result of the marriage of Isabel and Ferdinand.”¹²⁴ Nonetheless, the foundation of the Spanish nation as we know it today is the Castilian state created by the Catholic Monarchs.

Problems surrounding nationalism in Spain today – particularly with regard to Catalonia and the Basque Country – can be traced back, at least in part, to the achievements of Isabel *la Católica* and the perpetuation of her myth. Identity conflicts lie at the base of these regions’ movements for independence. The fact that the Castilian state constitutes the foundation of the Spanish nation might cause problems of identity for autonomous communities who prefer to consider Castile another community equal to their own. The historical obsession for Spanish national unity which began with Isabel has perhaps been one of the reasons why politicians and individuals have refused to consider the possibility of the existence of multiple nations and multiple identities in Spain.

¹²⁴ “Uno de los aspectos más engañosos que puede ofrecer la Historia de España en los tiempos modernos es el de su supuesta unidad, a raíz del matrimonio de Isabel y Fernando” (Fernández Álvarez, *Isabel la Católica*, 459).

By encouraging such unity, Franco was able to help pull together a country devastated by civil war. At the same time, he encouraged a nationalistic sentiment among Spaniards that helped justify his authoritative regime. In that sense, it was a successful use of symbolism and rhetoric – one that has proven effective not only under Franco, but also during other times of crisis, including the one Spain is living today.

At the same time, however, Franco's campaign to convince his people of the existence of a single, great, and free nation dating back to the Catholic Monarchs' reign did have negative consequences for the Spanish people. The idea of a unified nation is associated with the repression of autonomous communities' identities. It has contributed to conflict within the Peninsula and a politically and economically destabilized country.

The myth of Isabel has proven useful over the centuries and has played a fundamental role in the history of Spain. Even more remarkable than the numerous contributions she made to Spain is how her legend continues to affect the Spanish people of today in a very real and direct way. As Peggy Liss reminds us, "[by] exaggerating some facts, simplifying others, introducing fictions, playing roles, Isabel represented herself as she wanted to be seen. In the course of her reign, Spanish unification advanced markedly, Spanish society changed radically and Spanish nationality received long-lasting definition."¹²⁵

Isabel's legend is very much alive today, as political groups on opposite sides of the spectrum use it to promote their ideologies: for the nationalists the myth serves as a historical justification of prestigious origin for their rhetoric; for those in favor of their autonomous community's independence and post-nationalists, on the other hand, Isabel's legend represents a conservative and monolithic discourse they can oppose. Both sides need the myth to strengthen their messages, and it serves them equally well, either as a representation of a glorious past they need to return to or an intolerant and imperialist past they need to combat and overcome.

125 Liss, "Isabel, Myth and History," 70.

Isabel *la Católica* for the 21st Century: Popular and Political Recreations

Emily C. Francomano

On 21 January 2015 in Miami, Desirée Cordero, the Miss Universe contestant from Spain, appeared in the National Costume Competition segment of the pageant dressed as Queen Isabel I.

The caption for her published photo read: “The Miss Universe Contest will be held in Miami, and the finals will be on the 25th of January. On that day a new queen will be introduced; in this case, a beauty queen.”¹ Her costume, designed by Pedro Lanzarote, took inspiration from historical documents and (most of all) from the RTVE series *Isabel* which aired in Spain from 2012 to 2014. This 21st-century re-imagining and re-presentation of Isabel la Católica in the Miss Universe pageant is a potent expression of the many and often contrary ways that Isabel’s memory and image have been put to political and popular use in a trans-Atlantic context. As Isabel, Desirée Cordero stands tall, proud, and regal, representing Spain on the global stage. True to the centuries-long tradition of appropriating Isabelline imagery, Isabel once again is framed as the ideal of Spanish womanhood – and, indeed, universal womanhood. But unlike the past national-Catholic and Francoist image revered for her piety, domestic virtues, abnegation, and political acumen, in the Miss Universe pageant, Isabel the beauty queen is the product of medievalist fantasy: her low-cut gown is a reminder that this is a beauty contest, after all, and the order of the day is the objectification of women in a competition. Although it might seem that Isabel is all surface here, pure post-modernity, all political depth and complexity turned into sexual commodification, I would argue that this Isabel is politically compelling *thanks to* her apparent lack of depth. In this way, the historical Isabel the Catholic Monarch is palimpsestically present in the image created by Cordero and Lanzarote – which is, in turn, closely related to other recent re-imaginings of modern Spain’s founding mother.

1 The original Spanish caption for the image read: “La gala de Miss Universo se celebra en Miami y la final será el 25 de enero. Ese día se conocerá a nueva reina; en este caso, de la belleza” (<http://www.rtve.es/television/20150122/isabel-catolica-concursa-miss-universo/1085220.shtml>, accessed 14 October 2019).



FIGURE 13.1 Desirée Cordero, Miss Universe contestant from Spain, in the National Costume Competition segment of the pageant held on 21 January 2015 in Miami, dressed as Queen Isabel I

PHOTO COURTESY OF GARY ROTHSTEIN

Queen Isabel I of Castile is never far from the popular imagination or long absent from political discourse in Spain. In her lifetime and in the wake of civil war that endangered her legitimacy as monarch, the queen worked assiduously to craft her own image, aided by the writers in her employ: Enríquez del Castillo,

Hernando del Pulgar, Diego de Valera, and Juan de Flores. Consequently, as David Boruchoff observes, the process of “transmutation of pietistic rhetoric into historical fact” began very early in the historical record and then would be repeated throughout the centuries.² Despite counter-narratives and contestation, the quasi-hagiographic image of the Catholic Monarch forged by official chroniclers in the late 15th and early 16th centuries turned Isabel into “a cornerstone of the Spanish national imaginary” that persists to this day.³ As Peggy Liss puts it, “After Isabel, the reign of the Catholic Monarch remained a high point in Spanish history. Only Christians were considered Spaniards. Isabel’s fictions – some that she believed in, others that seemed politically useful, all of them clothed in religion – had historic consequences, influenced history and became part of it. Her own interpretation of history fell on fertile ground and flourished for centuries.”⁴ The appropriation of Isabel as a model for National Catholic womanhood in the 20th century and the contestations of the Franco regime’s heavy-handed Isabelline propaganda leading up to and during the transition to democracy have been studied in depth, notably by Nancy Marino, Peggy Liss, and Barbara Weissberger. Weissberger in particular takes Carmen Martín Gaité’s reflections on growing up during the dictatorship and being encouraged to imitate Isabel as her point of critical departure.⁵

Isabel’s legacy is contentious. Desirée Cordero’s Isabel can be read as both a sincere patriotic homage or a campy performance (perhaps there need not be a conflict between the two). For some, Isabel is a saint to be revered for her steadfast faith and the spread of Christianity in the Americas, wrongly impugned by the Black Legend and the chauvinism of anti-Catholic historians. For others, Isabel is the standard-bearer of Spanish anti-Semitism and the author of a devastatingly successful program of religious and ethnic exclusion. For many, she is also the symbol of Spain’s unification and consolidation as a national-political entity at the end of the Middle Ages. Whatever her place in the contested story of Spain’s emergence as a global empire, Isabel I is a figure

2 David Boruchoff, “Introduction: Instructions for Sainthood and other Feminine Wiles in the Historiography of Isabel I,” in *Isabel la Católica, Queen of Castile: Critical Essays*, ed. David Boruchoff (New York: 2003), 1–23, at 13.

3 Barbara Weissberger, *Isabel Rules: Constructing Queenship, Wielding Power* (Minneapolis: 2004), xvii.

4 Peggy Liss, “Isabel la Católica: Topics and Topicality,” *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 85 (2008): 259–283, at 67.

5 Nancy F. Marino, “Inventing the Catholic Queen: Images of Isabel I in History and Fiction,” in *Queen Isabel I of Castile: Power, Patronage, Persona*, ed. Barbara Weissberger (Woodbridge, UK: 2008), 186–99; Carmen Martín Gaité, *El cuarto de atrás*, ed. José Teruel (Madrid: 2018); and Weissberger, *Isabel Rules*.

of great importance in historiographic record – present, as it were, at the creation of the Spanish Empire, the emergence of the modern state, and still with us in the continual negotiation of national identity. All recreations of Isabel are creations of Neo-medievalism, aesthetic and political expressions of desire about how the past should have been and how that desired past explains (and also determines) present reality.

It is the purpose of this chapter to build upon the work of scholars who have sought to analyze modern Isabelline imagery in order to understand how it has evolved. Representations of Isabel remain a cornerstone in the Spanish historical and national imaginary in the 21st century thanks to television and film – two powerful mediums for (mis)shaping historical knowledge and cultural identity – and also thanks to the recently reinvigorated campaign for Isabel's canonization and renewed presence in the political discourse of the far right in Spain. Unlike single-authored literary and biographical works, these representations, approximations, and remediations of the queen all result from the shared labor of institutions, corporations, directors, actors, and others, all attuned to their reception by audiences who are not expert historians of the later Middle Ages and Early Modernity. The 21st-century recreations of the queen studied here are cultural texts that circulate in the public domain. They are, by and large, made for “amateurs” in the sense offered by Carolyn Dinshaw: that is, for non-expert “fans and lovers” of the medieval figure and her era, who approach the past from “outside, or beside, the culture of professionalism,” apart from academia and often unconcerned by scholarly standards.⁶ While Dinshaw is most interested in amateurs as producers of knowledge about the Middle Ages, I am more interested in the effects of historical remediations made by experts in fields other than history such as screenwriters, television producers, and *couture* designers remaking Isabel for popular consumption, as well as those historians whose professional expertise is grounded in institutional aims, such as the conservative historians and members of the Catholic organization Miles Jesu. These figures are producing historical accounts as part of the campaign for canonization, for both popular and ecclesiastical consumption. Moreover, these recreations of the Catholic Queen all take place against the emotionally fraught backdrop of what has been called Spain's “Memory Boom” of memoirs, novels, and films about the Civil War and its long aftermath. Remembering Isabel I, for some, is a way of remembering the ‘crusade’ of the Civil War and also a way of looking back at

6 Carolyn Dinshaw, *How Soon is Now? Medieval Texts, Amateur Readers, and the Queerness of Time* (Durham: 2012), 21, 24 and 29. My readings of these cultural texts have also been shaped by Sarah Ahmed's *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh: 2004).

a supposedly less disputed historical moment, despite all the contention surrounding Isabel and the long shadows cast by the expulsion of racial minorities, forced conversions to Catholicism, and colonialization.⁷ It is also a way of reconciling present identity with the past.

1 *Isabel*

The historical drama series *Isabel* is fictionalized biography that remains quite close to the traditional hagio-historiographical view of Isabel. The first season covers the years leading up to Isabel's marriage to Ferdinand of Aragon and her assumption of the throne of Castile in 1474. Season Two concludes with Isabel's *annus mirabilis*: the conquest of Granada and the first voyage of Columbus. In addition to Isabel's death, the final season covers the marriages of Isabel and Ferdinand's children, including Juana of Castile's marriage to Phillip, Archduke of Flanders, paving the way for the subsequent RTVE series *Carlos V* and the film *La corona partida*. Directed by Jordi Frades, starring Michelle Jenner and Rodolfo Sánchez as Isabel and Fernando, and written by teams of screenwriters led first by Javier Olivares in Season One – and then by José Luis Martín in Seasons Two and Three – *Isabel* is a highly ornate and lovingly crafted homage to Isabel I. It seeks to make her relatable to contemporary audiences without tampering too much with the long history of Isabelline imagery and appropriation that precedes it.

One of the effects of the television series is to make Isabel familiar, knowable, a woman of flesh and blood that audiences can see and hear – almost touch – ‘as if’ she were alive today. She is, as the show's producers say, “a modern woman,” preternaturally present to rule at the end of the Middle Ages. Yet the Isabel reimagined for the 21st century by RTVE looks just enough like the most Catholic Isabel so as not to shock older, more conservative viewers, and modern enough to be attractive to Spain's largely secular and increasingly diverse millennials. The series offered fans more than just the episodes it aired: the producers also created an extensive multimedia platform. The show

7 The material that follows on the television series *Isabel, The Ministry of Time* (*El Ministerio del Tiempo*) and the film *The Queen of Time* (*La Reina de España*) has been adapted from my previously published book chapter, “The Queen of Time,” in *Premodern Rulers and (Post)modern Viewers: Gender, Sex, and Power in Popular Culture*, ed. Karl Alvestad et al. (New York: 2018), 179–94. On the “memory boom,” see Jo Labanyi, “Memory and Modernity in Democratic Spain: The Difficulty of Coming to Terms with the Spanish Civil War,” *Poetics Today* 28.1 (2007): 89–116, at 95.

clearly aims also to instruct while it entertains: in addition to links to all of the episodes, clips of the “mejores momentos” (highlights) of each episode, interviews with the actors, and short ‘making of’ films, the website contains both an “árbol de personajes” (character tree) and an interactive “mapa de personajes” (map of the characters), an interactive map of Columbus’s travels, as well as short articles called “curiosidades históricas” (historical curiosities) concerning specific anecdotes and early modern customs, and more.⁸ Curiously, although the series’ title is *Isabel*, the website address specifies “Isabel la Católica.” The official RTVE website for *Isabel* declares, “This is the story of a woman who decided to take control of her own destiny” and states that its three seasons combine to tell the story of “what we now know as Spain.” It presents Isabel as “a modern woman who reigned in a court filled with ambitious men.” These statements reflect how the series actively sought to shape historical memory and to unite Isabel’s character and personal life with Spain’s history and contemporary identity.⁹ Further, as Weissberger observes, the show’s handling of Isabel and Fernando’s Castilian-Aragonese alliance “implicitly rejects the hard line of national unity and centralization taken by conservative Spanish politicians” at the time of its filming, a stance which has only hardened in the years since the series aired.¹⁰ The series also links to multiple historical-national pasts by basing some of its scenes on famous 19th-century paintings, notably Francisco Pradilla’s *La rendición de Granda* (The Surrender of Granada), painted in 1882, in the final episode of Season Two and Eduardo Rosales’s *Doña Isabel dictando su testamento* (Isabel dictating her will), painted in 1864, in the series’ final episode.¹¹ The series thus links its own 15th- and 16th-century context to the 19th-century’s Romanticism as well as to our present day.

Like so many fantasy heroines in Neo-medievalism, Isabel is portrayed as an extraordinary individual – a ‘modern woman’ before her time – who rises above the expectations of the patriarchal system that produced her.¹² Not

8 <http://www.rtve.es/television/isabel-la-catolica/la-serie/>, accessed 13 October 2019.

9 “Ésta es la historia de una mujer que decidió ser la dueña de su propio destino”; “lo que hoy conocemos como España”; “Isabel, una mujer moderna que reinó en una corte llena de hombres ambiciosos” (“Fin de rodaje de ‘Isabel,’” <http://www.rtve.es/television/isabel-la-catolica/la-serie/>, accessed 13 October 2019; and <http://www.rtve.es/television/2011212/isabel-mujer-moderna-reino-corte-llena-hombres-ambiciosos/481353.shtml>, accessed 27 October 2019).

10 Barbara Weissberger, “Isabel on TV: Politics Past and Present,” *Early Modern Women: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 8 (2013): 349–59, at 358.

11 <http://lab.rtve.es/serie-isabel/rendicion-de-granada/#> and <http://www.rtve.es/alacarta/videos/isabel/isabel-isabel-firma-testamento/2850180/>, accessed 25 October 2019.

12 Jane Tolmie, “Medievalism and the Fantasy Heroine,” *Journal of Gender Studies* 15.2 (2006): 145–58.

surprisingly, Isabel's extraordinary intelligence, piety, familial dedication, patriotism, and political acumen are highlighted throughout the series. She is seen at prayer frequently, and she loves her mother, brother, husband, and homeland passionately. She is headstrong, a keen chess player who honors personal relationships above interest or gain, and a woman who acts alone without seeking masculine permission. Isabel even notably complains of the sexual double standard (Season One, Episode Nine).

Isabel also fantasizes about the historical Isabel's views on religious diversity. In the series she is pious, and conspicuously more so than her antagonist and sister-in-law Isabel of Portugal, whom she taunts by asking: "haven't you seen the rosary prayed before?" (Season One, Episode Four). The series features many scenes of Isabel at prayer, echoing the historical records as they have come down to us, which describe Isabel dedicating several hours each day to religious devotion. However, as Emily S. Beck has observed, the series is ambivalent about Isabel's religiosity because of its overarching goal of appealing to 21st-century viewers. Moreover, throughout the series – in fact, up until the final decision to expel the Jews from her realms – Isabel is shown rising above both the anti-Semitism and distrust of the *conversos* of her day. Beck reviews key moments in the series that emphasize Isabel's tolerance: her discomfiture that the Christian mobs attacking *conversos* in Toledo must be allowed to do so if she values their allegiance in her brother's quest for the throne (Season One, Episode Four), and her eager acceptance of aid from the Jewish community while fighting a civil war for her own claims to the throne against her niece Juana's (Season Two, Episode Sixteen). The series imagines Isabel as a woman of exceptional broad-mindedness for cultural hybridity and devotion to *all* her subjects, no matter their religion. The series stresses that Fernando forced Isabel to agree to inaugurate the Spanish Inquisition (Season Two, Episodes 19 and 20), while Isabel insists on evangelization, mercy, fairness and that she does not want any "outrages committed in my name."¹³ Isabel's 'modern' attitudes of religious tolerance are perhaps never more clearly emphasized than in the conclusion to Season Two, in which the momentous events of 1492 are memorialized.

The series credits Fernando with the idea to expel the Jews as well as with the arguments necessary to convince his wife:

ISABEL: Expel the Jews? Why? They have lived in our realms for centuries [...] There are Jews among our tax collectors. Their

13 "Desmanes en mi nombre" (Season Two, Episode 20).

loans have financed many of our ventures [...] And more than a few of our business deals have passed through their hands. Are we going to reject those who show us favor?

FERNANDO: Under the protection of a single faith, we will achieve the unity that we have always so desired. And we need Rome's favor.

ISABEL: We have just waged the most costly crusade ever against the infidels. Why would Rome withdraw its support for us now?

FERNANDO: Rome might hesitate, now that you have kept part of the money from the Papal bull. And the expulsion would satisfy Torquemada.

ISABEL: I insist on a single condition.

FERNANDO: Say it.

ISABEL: That I be the one to decide the terms of the expulsion. I will not permit Torquemada to act as he pleases.¹⁴

As Beck cogently argues, the show contrasts Isabel's tolerance with Torquemada's zealotry and her husband's political machinations, thus presenting her as "an almost progressive leader [...] friendly towards religious minorities and open minded about creating a unified peninsula in which all religions will coexist in peace," thereby "profoundly reorient[ing] the policies of the queen in the historical record" and also undermining the series' continued emphasis on Isabel's independent political maneuvering.¹⁵ The "Curiosidades históricas" (Historical curiosities) supplemental article to this episode, "¿Por qué expulsaron Isabel y Fernando a los judíos?" (Why did Isabel and Fernando expel the Jews?), similarly soft-pedals Isabel's role in the expulsion, asserting that it must not have been to Isabel's liking, that she was only doing what other European kingdoms had done long before; and that a large

14 "Isabel: ¿Expulsar a los judíos? ¿Por qué motivo? Viven desde hace siglos en nuestros reinos. [...] Hay judíos entre nuestros recaudadores de impuestos. Sus préstamos han financiado muchas de nuestras empresas. [...] Y no son pocos los negocios que pasan por sus manos. ¿Vamos a rechazar a quienes nos favorecen? Fernando: Al amparo de una sola fe, conseguiríamos la unidad que tanto deseábamos. [...] Y necesitamos el favor de Roma. Isabel: Hemos librado la mayor y más costosa cruzada contra el infiel. ¿Por qué iba Roma a negarnos su apoyo? Fernando: Quizá dude, ahora que os habéis quedado con parte del dinero de la bula. La expulsión apaciguará a Torquemada. [...] Isabel: Sólo pongo una condición. Fernando: Hablad. Isabel: Que sea yo quien dicte los términos de la expulsión. No permitiré que Torquemada campe a sus anchas."

15 Emily S. Beck, "Religious Medievalisms in RTVE's *Isabel*," in *Premodern Rulers and (Post) modern Viewers*, ed. Alvestad et al., 170–72.

proportion of her Christian subjects were strongly anti-Semitic.¹⁶ Tomás de Torquemada, consequently – in both the scenes of historical fiction and in the supplemental material meant to give the series historical heft – is cast as the severe architect of the Spanish Inquisition.¹⁷

Despite its use of imagined dialogues evincing Isabel's modern, proto-feminist and religiously tolerant views, as Weissberger sums up the show's handling of its legendary protagonist, "*Isabel* the series weaves together historical fact and fantasy, and it continues to do so throughout"; its "portrayal of Isabel conforms closely to the dominant historiography given initial shape by the queen's own court chroniclers, despite constant attempts by both allies and opponents to manipulate her for their own gain, she remains the self-contained, modest, pious, and resolute young woman idealized over the last five hundred years."¹⁸ Further, the show's portrayal of Isabel serves effectively to distance her from the Black Legend, neatly packaging the queen as an inspirational historical foremother.

2 *The Ministry of Time*

Michelle Jenner reprised her role as Isabel in another popular series that aired recently on RTVE 1 and Netflix: *The Ministry of Time* (*El Ministerio del Tiempo*) in four seasons from 2015 to 2020.¹⁹ If *Isabel* aimed for an air of authenticity and historical accuracy while updating the queen for 21st-century audiences, *The Ministry of Time* was ever conscious of the constructed nature of national history and the need to protect shared cultural memory in the process of rewriting the historiographical record. In *The Ministry of Time*, a clandestine government agency sends secret agents back in time to make sure that the course of history runs 'true' to received historical narratives, which are constantly threatened by historical truths and time-travelling traitors. Isabel I, as the founding mother of modern Spain, is credited with founding the secret agency in 1491, just a year before the conquest of Granada, the expulsion of the

16 Paloma G. Quirós, "Curiosidades históricas del capítulo 26 de *Isabel*: ¿Por qué Isabel y Fernando expulsaron a los judíos?" *RTVE*, <http://www.rtve.es/television/20131202/isabel-fernando-expulsaron-judios/807521.shtml>, accessed 28 January 2017.

17 "*Isabel* – ¿Sabías que Torquemada era de origen judío?" <http://www.rtve.es/alacarta/videos/isabel/isabel-sabias-torquemada-era-origen-judio/2085093/>, accessed 18 December 2019.

18 Weissberger, "Isabel on TV," 351–52.

19 In 2016, Netflix bought the rights to broadcast the first three seasons internationally.

Jews, Columbus's first voyage, and the publication of the first Spanish grammar by Nebrija. The concurrent founding of the Ministry and the founding of the modern nation is no coincidence. The work of the Ministry is nothing less than the preservation of cultural memory and the cultural identity on which it depends: in Jan Assman's words, those "islands in time," the "fixed points" and "fateful events" on the historical horizon that do "not change with the passing of time" because their "memory is maintained through cultural formation and institutional communication."²⁰ A production of state-run media, *The Ministry of Time* is frequently just an institutional recitation of the known and mutually agreed-upon fateful events. In many ways, the show cooks up an easily digestible and simplified vision of national history, supposedly shared by Spaniards that have lived in a cohesive polity and spoken a single language for at least ten centuries.²¹ In their article on *The Ministry of Time* as "historical science fiction," José Carlos Rueda and Carlota Coronado write that the show – like other television productions imagining the national past – reproduces a "banal nationalism." Even though *The Ministry of Time* plays with history and often "constructs a new television image" of historical personages, its creators still emphasize textbook "canonical meanings in the spirit of national affirmation" at the same time as they "abort the possibility of a history different from that familiar to the audience." The appeals to nationalism also limit the action of time-travel to the geopolitical frontiers of Spain and erase regional linguistic differences, as Rueda and Coronado note. Spain, consequently, is one coherent nation from the beginning of time to the present, in the series' vision. For Rueda and Coronado, *The Ministry of Time* curtails possibilities of historical reflection in its appeals to hegemonic notions of nation and cultural authority, ultimately reflecting the ideological tendencies of the Partido Popular (PP).

The creation of the Ministry is first explained in Episode One: we meet the main character, Julián Martínez, played by none other than Rodolfo Sánchez, a paramedic with PTSD who is given the choice to join up as an undercover agent in the Ministry or spend the rest of his life in a mental hospital because he has stumbled upon Napoleonic time-travelers. Salvador Martí (Jaime Blanch), his new boss and undersecretary of the Ministry, explains to Julián that Isabel I learned about time travel from Rabbi Abraham Levi, who offered her his

20 I take this definition of cultural memory from the now-classic essay by Jan Assmann, "Cultural Memory and Cultural Identity," trans. John Czaplicka, *New German Critique* 65 (1995): 125–133, at 129.

21 José Carlos Rueda Laffond and Carlota Coronado Ruiz, "Historical Science Fiction: From Television Memory to Transmedia Memory in *El Ministerio del Tiempo*," *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* 17.1 (2016): 87–101, at 91.

precious *Book of the Doors in Time* (*Libro de las puertas del tiempo*) in exchange for her protection from expulsion for him and his family. Unfortunately, as Salvador explains, although Levi was not expelled, the founding of the Ministry “is not an inspiring or edifying story”: the historical-fictional Isabel did not keep her promise, and Levi was eventually burned at the stake by the Inquisition – the actual institution founded by the historical Catholic Monarchs in 1478.²² This Isabel is not quite so compassionate toward her Jewish subjects as her counterpart in *Isabel*.

Season One, Episode Four returns to the founding myth of the Ministry, this time making viewers the eyewitnesses to Isabel’s acceptance of the rabbi’s book and bargain.²³ The *Book of the Doors in Time* is a large manuscript that alludes visually to other fabled and exoticized esoteric books of rabbinical origins, and Isabel worries that the book must contain black magic. Levi, wise beyond his era, tells the queen how science always seems like magic when it is not understood. He then relates how he saved the book from a burning synagogue. He explains that he is offering her the chance to be “the queen of time,” a prospect that brings a power-hungry gleam to her eyes.

The retelling of the 15th-century origins of the Ministry in this episode is allegedly inspired by the demand for reparations and the restoration of the rabbi’s book to Levi’s present-day descendants, who have sent one Aaron Stein (a lawyer from New York) to Madrid. The demand for reparations is presented as blackmail: Stein has threatened to expose the Ministry and all its manipulations of history if it does not pay 100 million dollars and also return the book to Levi’s descendants. Stein also presents newly discovered documents including Isabel’s signed letter of protection for Levi and the Inquisitorial record of his execution. When Salvador protests that 500 years have passed and any conceivable statute of limitations must have passed as well, Stein remarks intimidatingly that his clients want justice, and 500 years is also a long time for the Ministry’s activities to remain secret. Salvador retorts, with anti-Semitic overtones: “I don’t think you’re seeking justice: you want money, right?”²⁴

The Ministry’s response is not to find a way to give justice to Levi’s descendants, but rather to plan a mission to change Isabel’s past behavior and the outcome of Levi’s trial. The Ministry’s agents must make the queen remember to send a letter to the Inquisition, thereby saving Levi, while she is in the midst

22 “No es una historia edificante” (Season One, Episode One, titled “Time is what it is” [El tiempo es el que es], http://www.rtve.es/contenidos/el-ministerio-del-tiempo/MdT_%20cap_1v9.pdf, accessed 26 April 2017).

23 Season One, Episode Four, titled “Una negociación a tiempo” (aired on 16 March 2015).

24 “Creo que usted no busca justicia: busca dinero, ¿verdad?” (Season One, Episode Four).

of planning the final stages of her conquest of Granada – which will lead to the decree of the Alhambra, ordering the expulsion. Should the mission succeed, Salvador asserts: “they’ll have no case against us”; both the Ministry and modern Spain will be off the hook.²⁵ Julián, along with agents Amelia Folch (a 19th-century bluestocking) and Alonso de Entreríos (a soldier of the 16th-century imperial Spanish army) are deployed back to 1491 to save the day – and the past 500 years.

Aaron Stein’s appearance in the Ministry is an uncomfortable reminder of the troubling historical legacy of the persecution suffered by Jews and *conversos* in the era that Spanish academic historians and cultural memory have traditionally seen as the beginning of modern Spain.²⁶ Much of the contemporary debate about historical memory in Spain has revolved around the idea that the nation is haunted by ghosts of the past that “need to be acknowledged before they can be put to rest.”²⁷ Like the ghosts of the Civil War, “never properly buried, mourned or exorcised,” that “have come now back to haunt” the present,²⁸ in *The Ministry of Time* the expelled ghosts of Sephardic Jews and persecuted *conversos* are also back, demanding recognition and reparation. *The Ministry of Time* is ambivalent about their possible Spanish identity, however. The representations of the medieval Levi and modern Aaron Stein – the one romanticized as the wise bearer of secret knowledge, and the other negatively imagined as an internationally connected, aggressive, materialistic New Yorker, who by threatening to expose the Ministry also threatens to undermine the Spanish state and its history – are the stereotyped products of an imaginary in present-day Spain where the Jewish population is very small. Even

25 “Así no tendrán nada que reclamarnos” (Season One, Episode Four).

26 On the tenacity of this vision of the Catholic Monarchs’ unification of Spain and inauguration of a ‘Golden Age,’ see J.N. Hilgarth, “Spanish Historiography and Iberian Reality,” *History and Theory* 24.1 (1985): 23–43.

27 Labanyi, “History and Hauntology; or, What Does One Do with the Ghosts of the Past? Reflections on Spanish Film and Fiction of the Post-Franco Period,” in *Disremembering the Dictatorship: The Politics of Memory in the Spanish Transition to Democracy*, ed Joan Ramon Resina (Amsterdam: 2000), 65–82, at 66. See also José Colmeiro, “A Nation of Ghosts?: Haunting, Historical Memory and Forgetting in Post-Franco Spain,” *452°F. Electronic Journal of Theory and Comparative Literature* 4 (2011): 14–24; Sebastian Faber, “The Price of Peace: Historical Memory in Post-Franco Spain (a Review-Article),” *Revista Hispánica Moderna* 58.1/2 (2005): 205–19 and “Revis(it)ing the Past: Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation in Post-Franco Spain (a Review-Article [second part]),” *Revista Hispánica Moderna* 59.1/2 (2006): 141–51; and Alison Ribeiro de Menezes, *Embodying Memory in Contemporary Spain* (New York: 2014).

28 Faber, “The Price of Peace,” 205.

so, anti-Semitism continues to be deeply rooted and reflexive in language and culture, if not frequently expressed in violent attacks on individuals or property.²⁹

In addition to actual blackmail, Stein's threats amount to a kind of emotional blackmail regarding how current audiences should remember the 1490s and Isabel's legacy. The episode makes clear that the Inquisition and the Catholic Monarchs' aggressive campaign for religious purity is a stubborn and traumatic historical stain through uncanny repetition. The mission fails repeatedly. The agents must return three times to the day of Levi's trial before history at last comes out right and Isabel can remain on the side of the angels rather than the oppressors. We see Levi condemned to the stake and burned four times: originally when Stein reminds Salvador of Isabel's unfulfilled promise, and then again and again when the agents fail to convince Torquemada to free Levi (first by clever argumentation, second with a papal bull, and third with a letter from the queen *and* the bull). Finally, to succeed, the agents have to kidnap the real Torquemada and replace him with another undercover agent, Ernesto, who just happens to be – or to have been, when he was recruited into the Ministry – Torquemada's look-alike and father. In each attempt to save Levi, audiences are treated to multiple rehearsals of the *auto de fe*. We hear the shouts of "*marrano*"³⁰ and see rocks thrown at Levi as he is paraded through the streets wearing the penitential robes of a condemned heretic. We see him accused by Torquemada and condemned three times as a *judaizante*, a crypto-Jew.³¹ As Julián remarks with an intertextual wink, "it's just like 'Groundhog Day,' but medieval."³² Dark humor aside, audiences are treated to a vicarious

29 According to the Federación de Comunidades de Judíos de España (FCJE), there are currently about 40,000 Jews in Spain (<http://www.fcje.org/>, accessed 29 March 2017). For an analysis of contemporary anti-Semitism in Spain, see the *Informe sobre el antisemitismo en España durante los años 2013 y 2014*, also published by the FCJE (<https://archive.jpr.org.uk/download?id=2720>, accessed 18 February 2020). The representations of Jewish characters in *The Ministry of Time* are articulations of what David Nirenberg refers to as a "habit of thought" that "project[s] figures of Judaism onto the world" rather than representations of particular historical individuals (David Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism: The Western Tradition* [New York: 2013], 4).

30 Literally "pig," a slur used against Jewish converts to Christianity, particularly those accused of continuing to practice Judaism in secret.

31 In the first telling of the Ministry's founding in Episode One, Salvador says that Levi had been burned as a heretic; but in Episode Four, the accusation is of secret Judaizing. This alteration may have been made in the interests of historical accuracy on the part of *The Ministry of Time*'s producers because the Inquisition did not have jurisdiction over Jews, only over Christians, including the *conversos* (converts).

32 "Es como 'El día de la marmota' pero medieval" (Season One, Episode Four).

experience of trauma, repeatedly revisited and observed until the wound is healed in historiographical fiction – not by reparation, but by the intervention of the Ministry.

The agents' direct encounters with Isabel are ironic revisitings of 21st-century audiences' reception of the series *Isabel*, and even include the script's joking reference to Rodolfo Sánchez's role in the previous series when Julián says to Amelia, "I'm sure I've seen her somewhere before."³³ The agents' attitudes towards Isabel range from reverence to ironic and gendered criticism. On their third attempt to save Levi, the agents come before the queen in her throne room in Toledo, impersonating emissaries from the Vatican with a Papal absolution for Levi, now baptized and called Luis de Andrés. Isabel is surprised that Levi needs papal intervention, protesting, "Abraham Levi is under my protection!" and asks Cardinal Cisneros, who is by her side, if he knows anything about the situation. When he denies any knowledge of Levi's plight, she asks, "And my husband?" The Cardinal bows his head in assent.³⁴ After Isabel promises to intervene on Levi's behalf and dismisses the agents, she is heard off-screen berating Cisneros: "How many times have I said that nothing may be done without my permission? I am the Ruler of Castile, not my husband!"³⁵ Julián, overhearing, remarks: "What a pain in the neck that woman is!"³⁶ Amelia, the feminist *manquée* of her own bygone era, responds: "A woman needed to be that and more to get to the throne. Especially in the 15th century."³⁷ Alonso, a traditionalist and monarchist, says: "It's none of our business. She's the queen."³⁸ Amelia's retort recalls the exceptionalism of medieval fantasy heroines and serves as a Neo-medieval evaluation of the enormous changes in gender roles between the 15th and 21st centuries. On the other hand, Julián's stereotypically misogynistic response, though clearly another comic and inter-textual reference to *Isabel*, shows that the 21st century has not exactly progressed as much as Amelia might imagine back at home in her 19th century. In the next scene, the historically knowledgeable Amelia reaffirms the traditional view of Isabel, shared in the official cultural memories of the multiple temporalities the agents represent: "Isabel was always a woman of her word."³⁹

33 "Juraría que la conozco de algo" (Season One, Episode Four).

34 "¡Abraham Levi está bajo mi protección!"; "¿Y mi marido?" (Season One, Episode Four).

35 "¿Cuántas veces he dicho que no se haga nada sin mi consentimiento? [...] La reina de Castilla soy yo, no mi esposo!" (Season One, Episode Four).

36 "¡Vaya carácter tiene esta mujer!" (Season One, Episode Four).

37 "Una mujer necesita eso y más para llegar al trono. Y más en el siglo xv" (Season One, Episode Four).

38 "No es nuestro asunto. Es la reina" (Season One, Episode Four).

39 "Isabel siempre fue mujer de palabra" (Season One, Episode Four).

Eventually, the agents' mission succeeds. Levi is saved. Isabel will now always be a "woman of her word" and the Ministry will remain hidden to do the important work of historical memory that the Catholic Queen founded it to do, with no reparations to make to the descendants of the expelled Sephardic Jews and victims of the Inquisition. As in the series *Isabel*, all of the guilt for the Inquisition's cruelty comes to rest squarely on the shoulders of the villain for all times: Torquemada. Isabel's role in the expulsion and in the persecution of *judaizantes* is glossed over as a story of a personal relationship in which she keeps her promises, rather than as a concerted political strategy and religious ideology. Torquemada's father confronts his intolerant son, reminds him of their own *converso* heritage, and says of Jews – with the wisdom of 500 years, and toeing a liberal democratic line – "They are men and women. And no less than you because they have a different faith. No one is beneath anyone else, be they Christian, Muslim, or Jew. And if they committed any sin, God is the one who should judge them, not you."⁴⁰ In *The Ministry of Time*, Isabel still personifies Spain. Even if the Spain of her day had yet to see the error of its ways, the presence of the simultaneously 15th- and 21st-century Torquemada brings the past into alignment with the political correctness of 2015.

Yet, the episode's final act suggests that *The Ministry of Time's* image of Spanish national identity is less inclusive than the Torquemada-turned-secret-agent's speech would suggest. Levi symbolizes a past that needs to be made present because it is only by exhuming this long-forgotten ghost of the Catholic Monarchs' project of ethnic and spiritual cleansing that the Ministry can enact another kind of identity purification. The agents transport Levi to 2015, where he is temporarily reunited with his book and sees the wonders of the Ministry. Offered the opportunity to remain in 2015, where the cancer that will soon kill him back in 1491 can be cured, Levi meekly – or sagely, depending upon one's interpretation – thanks Salvador for saving him and expresses his relief that the book is in good hands, but announces that his time has come and that he prefers to return to the past and die. When Salvador says that there is an ulterior motive for Levi's rescue, the medieval rabbi (unlike his descendants) is eager to aid the mission of the Ministry to repudiate Stein.

Brought before Stein, Levi shames the lawyer in Hebrew, translated in subtitles as "leave the dead in peace or their spirits will drag you to death," a line which Levi himself then paraphrases to Salvador as "[n]either he nor any of

40 "Son hombres y mujeres. Y no son menos que tú por tener una fe diferente. Nadie es menos que nadie, sea cristiano, musulmán o judío. Y si cometieran un pecado, es Dios quien debe juzgarles, no tú" (Season One, Episode Four).

my descendants should shame Yahweh by their behavior.”⁴¹ Saved from the flames of the Inquisition’s *auto de fé* and content to return to the time of the expulsion, Levi graciously absolves the present from any need for reconciliation or reparation. Both Levi and Stein will go back where they came from and leave the Ministry in peace to do its secret business of preserving Spain’s cultural memory. This resolution of the Ministry’s dilemma when faced with the demand for reparations in the series finds an ironic counterpoint in the Spanish law passed in June of 2015, which established a four-year window for the descendants of Jews expelled from Spain to apply for citizenship.⁴² In 2021, a wave of denied applications brought the program under scrutiny.⁴³

In its blending of the birth of modern Spain with the birth and future of the Ministry itself, *The Ministry of Time*’s Neo-medieval fourth episode recalls a period of Spanish history when – like the Civil War and its aftermath during the Franco regime – the state built itself and its self-image through the eradication of its religious and political others. The show’s handling of the difficult historical legacy of the expulsion and the Inquisition in the interests of the present nation-state reflects the uneasy relationship between past and present, as well

41 “Dejad a los muertos en paz o sus espíritus os llevarán a la muerte” and “Que ni él ni mis herederos avergonzase a Yahvé con su comportamiento” (Season One, Episode Four).

42 LEY 12/2015 *Boletín oficial del estado*, 151, de 25 de junio de 2015. On 9 March 2018 the Spanish government extended the application period to 1 October 2019 and announced that 6,432 applications for citizenship had been accepted (https://www.boe.es/diario_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-2015-7045 and <https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/consejodeministros/Paginas/enlaces/090318-enlacesefardies.aspx>, accessed 18 December 2019). Unlike prior legislation regarding the right of return, the 2015 statute does not require applicants to agree to relinquish their citizenship in other countries. It does, however, set the standards for obtaining citizenship at a high bar, because not only do applicants have to demonstrate Sephardic heritage, but they must also show they have a current “special relationship to Spain” and speak Spanish.

43 In 2021, 15,274 applications were approved, but 3,019 were refused: “In total, since the law was passed, Spain has received 63,873 requests and approved 36,168, most between 2020 and 2021. Another 50,000 applications whose documents must be reviewed by a notary – now with extra care – are still being processed” (María Martín, “Una alerta policial por fraude dispara las denegaciones de nacionalidad a los sefardíes,” *El País* [20 August 2021], <https://elpais.com/espana/2021-08-20/una-alerta-policial-por-fraude-dispara-las-denegaciones-de-nacionalidad-a-los-sefardies.html>, accessed 26 September 2021). The English version appeared in Melissa Kitson’s “Thousands of Sephardic Applications for Spanish Nationality Denied following Fraud Alert,” (<https://english.elpais.com/spain/2021-08-20/thousands-of-sephardic-applications-for-spanish-nationality-denied-follo-wing-fraud-alert.html>, accessed 26 September 2021). See also Nicholas Casey, “Spain Pledged Citizenship to Sephardic Jews. Now They Feel Betrayed,” *The New York Times* (24 July 2021), <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/24/world/europe/spain-jews-citizenship-reparations.html?action=click&module=In%20Other%20News&pgtype=Homepage>, accessed 26 September 2021.

as the tenacity of Isabel's and 1492's fixed place in cultural memory. Ironically, just as Spain's identity today is built upon Isabel and Fernando's unification of Castile and Aragon and their conquest of Granada, the power to shape and reshape history in *The Ministry of Time* depends upon the spoils of the expulsion and the Inquisition, represented by Levi's appropriated book of secret knowledge.

3 Isabel Goes Back to the Movies: *The Queen of Spain*

Fernando Trueba's *The Queen of Spain* (*La Reina de España*), starring Penélope Cruz, attempted to offer a wholly different image of Isabel on the Spanish screen but failed spectacularly, due to a boycott of the film following the director's declaration, "[n]ever, even for five minutes of my life, have I felt Spanish" in his acceptance speech for the Spanish national prize for cinematography in September 2015 – a statement he explained later as a critique of nationalisms.⁴⁴ The wrath he incurred, followed by reviews critical of the film's representations of Isabel I, serves to highlight how images of the queen are still bound up closely with feelings of national identity.⁴⁵ Ironically, *The Queen of Spain* takes the impossibility of separating images of Isabel from politics as a given: set in 1956, the film portrays the making of a film about Isabel I and the conquest of Granada against the backdrop of Franco's totalitarian regime, censorship in Spain and the US, the building of The Valley of the Fallen, and Hollywood's use of an economically depressed Spain as an expedient place for making movies. In *The Queen of Spain*, Macarena Granada (Penélope Cruz) returns to Spain after having become an American citizen and Hollywood star to play the role

44 "Nunca me he sentido español. Ni cinco minutos de mi vida" (D. Prieto and C. Pastor, "Fernando Trueba: 'Nunca me he sentido español,'" *El Mundo*, 9 September 2015, <http://www.elmundo.es/cultura/2015/09/19/55fd5984ca47417c128b4578.html>, accessed 12 May 2017).

45 *The Queen of Spain* received few good reviews. For a range of critical reactions, see Juan Saguino, "No, el boicot a Trueba no tiene la culpa del fracaso de 'La reina de España,'" *Vanity Fair*, 30 November 2016, <http://www.revistavanityfair.es/actualidad/cine/articulos/boicot-a-trueba-no-tiene-culpa-fracaso-la-reina-de-espana/23163>, accessed 18 May 2017. See also Javier Ocaña, "Sombras en los ojos de la niña," *El País*, 24 November 2016, http://cultura.elpais.com/cultura/2016/11/24/actualidad/1479943642_150688.html, accessed 13 May 2017; Oti Rodríguez Marchante, "La reina de España: El valle de los alicaídos," *ABC*, 24 November 2016, http://www.abc.es/play/cine/criticas/abci-reina-espana-valle-alcaidos-201611242128_noticia.html, accessed 13 May 2017; and Luis Martínez, "Fernando Trueba," *El mundo*, 25 November 2016, <http://www.elmundo.es/opinion/2016/11/25/58373d5146163ff2468b45f5.html>, accessed 18 May 2017.

of Isabel I in "The Queen of Spain," a colossal epic filmed in a Spanish-US co-production supported by the Franco regime. This scenario clearly recalls the making of another epic about a national medieval hero that, like Isabel, held a special place in the dictator's ideology: *El Cid* (Anthony Mann, 1961).

The Queen of Spain is a sequel to Trueba's 1998 *The Girl of Your Dreams* (*La niña de tus ojos*), which similarly featured a film-within-a-film plot – in that case, the story of a Spanish-German film production set in 1938.⁴⁶ *The Girl of Your Dreams* pitted the actors and artists working on the film against both Nazis and Spanish Fascists. *The Girl of Your Dreams* contains a scene that predicts *The Queen of Spain*, playing upon the legendary anti-Semitism of Isabel I: Joseph Goebbels, Reich Minister of Propaganda, tries to seduce Macarena Granada by promising to give her the best and biggest roles in German film, as well as a role from Spanish history: "You will play the part of Isabel of Spain who expelled the Jews from Spain."⁴⁷ Trueba includes many other meta-cinematic winks throughout the movie, beginning with continual references to the prequel, *The Girl of Your Dreams*, and including many Hollywood classics such as *Sabrina* and *The Seven Year Itch*, as well as *The Princess Bride*.

Ironically, instead of featuring Isabel as the queen who expelled the Jews, the filming of *The Queen of Spain* within the film stages a symbolic return of the Jews to Spain in the form of characters such as the blacklisted screenwriter Jordan Berman (Mandy Patinkin) and the American producer Sam Spiegelman (Arturo Ripstein). This return is figured as simultaneously post-expulsion and post-Holocaust in its intertextual references to both *The Girl of Your Dreams'* portrayals of Jews in Berlin in 1938 and multitemporal evocations of 1492 and postwar Europe. The cast and crew use the filming of battles from the War of Granada as a ruse for rescuing another character, the director Fontiveros (Antonio Resines), a non-Jewish survivor of the concentration camps, from the Valley of the Fallen where he has been imprisoned and condemned to forced labor on the monument to Franco's victory.

Dense and conflictive historical memories are piled high in *The Queen of Spain*, where the historical film-within-a film setting goes beyond cinematic metafiction to historiographical metafiction. Like *The Ministry of Time*, in *The Queen of Spain* the remaking of the past within and for the present reveals

46 *La niña de sus ojos*, dir. Fernando Trueba, Lolafilms, 1998.

47 "Usted interpretará a Isabel la Católica que expulsó a los judíos de España" (*La niña de sus ojos*, dir. Fernando Trueba, Lolafilms, 1998). As Polly Hodge points out, Trueba portrays Goebbels as attempting to capitalize on 15th-century Spain and the Nazi regime's shared anti-Semitism in his failed seduction ("Maestros de la manipulación: titiriteros de la memoria histórica en 'No' de Pablo Larraín y 'La niña de tus ojos' de Fernando Trueba," *Hispania* 98.3 [2015]: 431–41, at 434–35).

the work of interpretation necessary for creating a historical film, as well as the powerful impact of mediatization on historical memory. However, in *The Queen of Spain* the layering of its diegetic present (1956) with the 21st-century present of its audience creates an ironic distance that *The Ministry of Time* only hints at as its 21st-century time-travelers visit multiple Spains past.

Penélope Cruz – who looks more like the voluptuous Sophia Loren in the role of Ximene in *The Cid* than Michelle Jenner in *Isabel* – is possibly the least likely of actresses to be typecast as Isabel I. And, in the hands of the film producers, both fictional and real, Isabel as portrayed by Macarena (as played by Cruz) is an anachronistic travesty, not unlike Desirée Cordero's Isabel-as-Miss Universe. Heavily made-up, long dark hair flowing, and decked out in low-cut velvet and gold brocade, "The Queen of Spain's" Isabel recalls Elizabeth Taylor's colossal and sexy Cleopatra; singing on the way to conquer Granada, she also channels Julie Andrews's Queen Guinevere. In short, other than the crown she wears, she is nothing like traditional images of Isabel I. As the crew is filming a scene in which Isabel and Fernando run towards each other, passionately embrace and kiss deeply, the historical consultant on set, Doña Matilde Velorracho (Ana Alonso), begins to complain vociferously about the scene's immorality and ahistoricism. Doña Matilde, upright historian and biographer of the Catholic Queen, simultaneously represents the Franco regime's preference for images of a pious and saintly Isabel and an academic historian's habitual dissatisfaction with Neo-medieval anachronisms.⁴⁸

Oti Rodríguez Marchante, in his review of *The Queen of Spain* for the conservative newspaper *ABC*, took particular offense at Trueba's "vision of history," perhaps willfully mistaking the film-within-a-film's recreation of Isabel for Trueba's own understanding of the 15th century. Trueba, of course, was not trying to portray Isabel I or the 15th century accurately, but rather to show the process of making a colossal historical epic under the shadow of censorship. Trueba portrays Spain in the 1950s, where filmmaking could, on the one hand, whitewash the political repression of the present; but on the other, could also be a force for liberation. This was much the case for *El Cid*, which lends itself to a traditional National Catholic reading but also portrays the Cid as a classically liberal hero positioned between two equally repressive regimes: the Almoravids and the Castilian rule of Alfonso VI.⁴⁹

48 This character is likely based upon Ángeles Villarta, author of *Isabel la Católica, la Reina de los españoles* (1950). In 2012 Villarta was named "dama de honor" by the Fundación Nacional Francisco Franco (http://www.fnff.es/M_Angeles_Villarta_Tunon_414_c.htm, accessed 17 May 2017).

49 Mark Jankovich, "'The Purest Knight of All': Nation, History, and Representation in *El Cid* (1961)," *Cinema Journal* 40.1 (2000): 79–103.

How can the historical record and Isabelline hagiographical historiography be reconciled? In one brief sequence, *The Queen of Spain* sums up the problem Isabel I presents to cultural memory and the challenge faced by Spanish directors and actors attempting to make the medieval queen appeal to contemporary audiences. Some 45 minutes into the film, we see Macarena sitting at her mirror, made up as Isabel, peering over the cover of Doña Matilde's biography *Isabel la Católica* to ogle a member of the film crew. The scene presents us with a triptych of three divas reflected in the make-up mirror, each suggestive of the mediatization and historical revisions that have molded cultural memory of Isabel I: Macarena-Isabel, the Hollywood queen; a traditional portrait of Isabel, the saintly queen; and a photograph of Doña Matilde, the Francoist official biographer.

Reading the academic biography has completely changed Macarena's image of Isabel: "I'm beginning to hate this Isabel, what a bitch, she's really getting on my nerves," she says, and then approaches the director, John Scott, for advice on how to play her role.⁵⁰ Speaking in English, Macarena explains: "I had the idea that this woman was a saint, when she was anything but. She threw the Jews out of Spain. She did the same thing with the Muslims. She organized the Inquisition. And on top of that she was a pig who swore never to wash until she won Granada back. Anyway, none of this appears in the script." When she finishes her short historical revision of Isabel, Macarena finds that the director has fallen asleep. Macarena as artist shares the conundrum of how to play Isabel with the producers of *Isabel*. But Hollywood could not care less about the historical Queen Isabel or the saintly ideogram of cultural memory.

The Queen of Spain and the film-within-a film, "The Queen of Spain," conclude simultaneously with an iris-in shot of Cruz-Macarena-Isabel crowned upon her throne. This triumphant finale is filmed just after Trueba brings Franco (Carlos Areces) face to face with Hollywood's version of his legendary Catholic Queen. In their confrontation, the power of the Hollywood star combined with the privilege of an American passport deflates the coercive power of the dictator, who – though he can remind Macarena of how her father died imprisoned by his regime – cannot control her. Macarena, in full Isabelline regalia, blows smoke into Franco's face and swears at him with an idiomatic phrase that translates loosely as 'I could give a flying fuck.' She is, like Macarena herself, the antithesis of Isabelline decorum.⁵¹ In this remake of Isabel, Franco has met his match. History as personified by Cruz-Macarena-Isabel will not be

50 "Le estoy cogiendo una tirria a la Isabel esta, menuda tiparraca la tía, me está atravesando" (*La Reina de España*, dir. Fernando Trueba, Lolafilms, 2016).

51 "Me las paso por el coño" (*La Reina de España*, dir. Trueba).



FIGURE 13.2 Detail of Penélope Cruz playing the role of Macarena Granada in Fernando Trueba's film *The Queen of Spain* (2016) showing a triptych of divas: Macarena-Isabel, the Hollywood queen; a traditional portrait of Isabel, the saintly queen; and Doña Matilde, the Francoist official biographer in the film.

managed by the state, though the state may finance a film that Doña Matilde complains "is indecent, intolerable, an ahistorical absurdity."⁵²

52 "¡indecente, es intolerable, esto es un completo disparate histórico!" (*La Reina de España*, dir. Trueba).

There is little that is straightforward about Trueba's characterization of cinematic medievalism. *The Queen of Spain* rejects both the National Catholic revision of Isabel and the academic's desire for historical accuracy, defending instead the freedom of artistic expression when representing the Middle Ages. It upholds the power, if not the responsibility, of creative art to oppose totalitarianism – a stance shared by *The Girl of Your Dreams*.

4 Saint Isabel?

The lengthy campaign to canonize Isabel I has not met with much success. In 1991 Pope John Paul II terminated the beatification process at the request of the Vatican's Council for Christian Unity because "Isabel's actions flatly contradict the teachings of Vatican Council II on Religious Liberty." According to one Vatican official, Isabel "was hardly a fit model for contemporary Catholics to imitate."⁵³ However, even more than Isabel's association with forced conversion in Spain and the Americas, the expulsion of the Jews, and the Spanish Inquisition, another factor accounts for the failure of the canonization campaign. Isabel lacks what is most vital to sainthood: a popular movement or groundswell of enthusiasm from a community that venerates and prays to her. This missing element is what has impeded her road to sanctity. Until quite recently, no miracles were attributed to her intervention, and she cannot be called a doctor of the church like Teresa of Ávila, her compatriot and canonized saint.⁵⁴ The campaign to canonize Isabel is driven by the Comisión Isabel la Católica, an organization headed by the Archbishopric of Valladolid and backed by other, largely very conservative groups and members of the Catholic Church, including Opus Dei and Miles Jesu.⁵⁵

53 Kenneth L. Woodward, "Saint Isabella? Not So Fast," *Newsweek* 117.15 (15 April 1991): 67, <http://search.ebscohost.com.proxy.library.georgetown.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,uid&db=aph&AN=9104152108&site=ehost-live&scope=site>, accessed 11 January 2020. The beatification of Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer (1902–1975), founder of Opus Dei, was put on hold at the same time. However, John Paul II did canonize Escrivá in 2002.

54 "She has one alleged miracle under her belt – the recovery from pancreatic cancer of an American, Roy Yearling, in 1999. A previous diagnosis had his family in despair but, after their prayers to Isabella, another scan showed the tumors had disappeared. This claim is under Vatican investigation" (James Murray, "Saint or Hood?" *Weekend Australian*, 24 May 2003, <https://search.proquest.com/docview/356530119?accountid=11091>, accessed 11 January 2020). See also <https://www.roman-catholic-saints.com/queen-isabella.html>, accessed 23 December 2019.

55 José Manuel Vidal, "Isabel la Católica, ¿santa?" *El Mundo: Crónica* 333 (3 March 2002), <https://www.elmundo.es/cronica/2002/333/1015235853.html>, accessed 10 October 2019.

The initial causes for canonization included Isabel's personal piety and her evangelization of Spain and the Americas. Although – as Rodríguez Valencia's anthology of Isabel's "fama de santidad" would seem to attest – her saintliness was evident from her youth, the campaign to canonize Isabel as a saint began in earnest in 1958, when the Archbishop of Valladolid, García Goldáraz (1893–1973), approved an ecclesiastical investigation into the causes for beatification. The archbishop enjoyed the approval of the state and was aided by the Minister of Education and head of the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (Spain's National Research Council), José Ibáñez Martín. In addition to the outright support of the Franco regime, the Comisión Isabel la Católica has maintained the tacit support of successive conservative governments, even after repeated rebuffs from the Vatican. In 2002, in the hope that Isabel's sanctity would be recognized in time for the 500th anniversary of her death in 2004, the Spanish bishops requested that the Vatican take up the case, but to no avail. Cardinal John Carberry and now-disgraced Cardinal Bernard Law were among other supporters in the conservative echelons of the American Church establishment.⁵⁶ José María Aznar and Mariano Rajoy both took pains to remind the Vatican of Isabel's importance. While visiting the Vatican in 2006, Rajoy gave Pope Benedict XVI a catalogue of an exposition honoring the 500th anniversary of Isabel's death.⁵⁷ In 2003, when John Paul II visited Spain, José María Aznar presented him with a biography of the queen.⁵⁸ In 2018 activities relating to the campaign intensified with a series of symposia across Spain.

As part of its efforts to rehabilitate Isabel's image, Miles Jesu has also published the pamphlet *Why Apologize for the Spanish Inquisition?*⁵⁹ The pamphlet seeks to convince readers that Catholics should not feel embarrassment or shame for their "own history." It wants to absolve Isabel for any atrocities associated with the expulsion and Inquisition by asserting that violence inspired and enacted against religious heterodoxy and indigenous peoples by Protestants during the Early Modern period was just as bad as, if not worse than, violence inspired and enacted by Catholics and in particular by the Catholic Queen,

56 Kenneth L. Woodward, "Isabella Is No Saint," *The New York Times*, 6 April 1991, <https://www.nytimes.com/1991/04/06/opinion/isabella-is-no-saint.html>, accessed 15 December 2019.

57 Agencia EFE, "El Papa recibe a Rajoy en el Vaticano," *El Mundo*, 27 January 2006, <https://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2006/01/27/espana/1138356826.html>, accessed 9 January 2020.

58 "Aznar no logra convencer al Papa de que la guerra es la mejor solución," *El Diario de León*, 2 February 2003, <https://www.diariodeleon.es/articulo/internacional/aznar-logra-convencer-papa-guerra-es-mejor-solucion/2003022800000648491.html>, accessed 9 January 2020.

59 Alphonsus Maria Duran and Paul Mary Vota, *Why Apologize for the Spanish Inquisition?* (Chicago: 2000).

stating that “Neither the Church nor Spain has to apologize for saving the lives of millions of people with the Catholic Spanish Inquisition, the most just and benign tribunal of its time.”⁶⁰

To date, the only academic study of the cult of Isabel la Católica that has come to my attention is Kat Grace’s 2016 thesis that studies how the 21st-century renovation of the campaign to canonize Isabel has “mobilized the Isabelline myth” through the imagined global community that the Comisión has sought to create around a series of digital archives on its website www.queenisabel.org (English version) and www.reinacatolica.es (Spanish version of the same).⁶¹ The Comisión’s website asks: is Isabel “the greatest woman in History since the Mother of God?” It states that

There is today a global crisis in public life, a murderous struggle over the proper relation between Church and State, between faith and politics. Although she had enemies, Queen Isabel was adored by her people and admired around the world. She proves that a sovereign can live the Catholic faith to the full, and that it is precisely this combination – capable and courageous leaders who believe in a God of love – which draws the greatest blessings on mankind, bringing peace, order and lasting prosperity.⁶²

The websites include bilingual archives of the Comisión’s magazine *Isabel*, which ran from 1996–2007; a history of the campaign for beatification and canonization to date; biographical documents relating to Isabel’s life in multiple languages; and information relating to the various symposia organized around the campaign for those who wish to attend. Although the Spanish side

60 Duran and Vota, *Why Apologize*, 1–2. Duran and Vota’s pamphlet does not cite any of the recent academic studies on the Inquisition such as Henry Kamen’s *The Spanish Inquisition: A Historical Revision* (New Haven: 1999), which would have served their purposes, though they do refer to a 1994 BBC documentary in which Kamen appeared, “The Myth of the Spanish Inquisition.” The pamphlet also includes references to other myths that have nothing to do with the Black Legend such as “The Myth of the Communist Paradise on Earth” (5), “The Myth of the Vicious, Criminal, Bloodthirsty Irish” (6–7), and “The Myth that Legal Abortion is the Will of the People” (10–11).

61 “The Greatest Woman in History since the Mother of God’: Global Catholic Community in Contemporary Efforts to Canonize Isabel of Castile” (Senior Thesis, Haverford College, Department of Religion, 2019), 19. The webpages of the Comisión Isabel la Católica are <https://www.queenisabel.org/> and <https://www.reinacatolica.es/> (accessed 1 October 2019).

62 <https://www.queenisabel.org/>.

of the site has received a new look for 2020, both the Spanish and the English versions – as Grace observed – are oddly static: the only interaction the site invites from users is reading, prayer, and the reporting of favors granted upon prayer to the head office of Miles Jesu. Nevertheless, for all that the Comisión has tried to foment an international community through its website and magazine, the campaign to canonize Isabel has been a top-down ecclesiastical and state operation from its very beginnings.

5 A Political Coda and Conclusions

Santiago Abascal, leader of the upstart ultra-right and anti-immigration Vox party, has firmly stated his admiration for Isabel on many occasions. He speaks for his party: “Against those who champion the Andalucía of Blas de Infante, Almanzor and Al-Andalus, we champion the Andalucía of Fernando III the Saint, of Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba, Isabel the Catholic and the Cortes of Cádiz.”⁶³ After attending “Isabel the Catholic: She Started It All,” a symposium in Granada celebrating Isabel in 2018, Abascal remarked that Isabel should be recognized as

[a] transcendental figure in Spanish history [...] not only responsible for the Reconquest, but also for saving Europe from Islamification and what is more, for giving Spain and humanity the greatest work of universal bonding that any country has ever done, and just for that I believe that we Spaniards have to feel great pride and not any kind of shame when we speak of the queen.⁶⁴

63 “Frente a los que reivindican la Andalucía de Blas Infante, de Almanzor y de Al-Andalus, nosotros reivindicamos la Andalucía de Fernando III El Santo, de Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba, de Isabel La Católica y de las Cortes de Cádiz” (#AndalucíaPorEspaña #VotaVOX #Córdoba, speech posted on Twitter and captured in David Barreira, “La reina de vox es Isabel la Católica, no Letizia: Por qué Abascal la venera,” *El Español*, 27 November 2018, https://www.elespanol.com/cultura/historia/20181127/vox-isabel-catolica-no-letizia-abascal-venera/356464679_0.html, accessed 11 January 2020).

64 “Una figura transcendental de la historia de España [...] no solo responsable por la Reconquista, sino de haber salvado a Europa de lo que ha sido la islamización y además de haber aportado a España y a la humanidad la mayor obra de hermanamiento universal que ha hecho ningún pueblo y solo por eso yo creo que los españoles tenemos que mostrarnos a la hora de hablar de la reina con mucho orgullo y con ningún tipo de vergüenza” (“Vox rinde homenaje,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GeoMMkVNou4>,

Abascal, who is seeking to stage a new “Reconquest” and to “Make Spain Great Again” by closing the country’s borders, finds a convenient historical model in Isabel.

More recently, Isabel Díaz Ayuso, the “Trumpista” President of the Community of Madrid, speaking in Washington, D.C. at the Organization of American States, lamented the vandalization of the statue of Isabel I that has stood in front of the OAS since 1966 during the 2020 protests against racism.⁶⁵ Almost literally in the shadow of Isabel, Ayuso asked, referring to movements that challenge heroic narratives of Spanish Imperialism: “Why, after 500 years are we beginning to revise the history of Spain in America and to question Hispanidad, when from the very beginning, what Spain brought to this continent was the university, Western civilization, the values that today still uphold liberal, prosperous democracies?”⁶⁶

And, like so many devotees of Isabel before them, both Ayuso and Abascal echo imperialist and messianic sentiments about the queen. *Isabel* and *The Ministry of Time* may not attempt the same historical revisions as the campaign for Isabel’s canonization or right-wing reclamation of heroic visions of empire, but their distancing of Isabel from the darker side of her political legacy – as well as their reaffirmation of her role as the woman present at the creation of modern Spain – serve the aims of those who would like to see her made a saint in the name of both national and global Catholicism. It also serves the aims of those who would like to think of Spain as a liberal democracy that has

viewed 10 December 2019). The symposium’s title in Spanish was “Isabel la Católica: Con ella empezó todo,” sponsored by Milenioweb.es and the Biblioteca Homo Legens.

65 According to the Smithsonian Art Inventories Catalog, the statue was dedicated in 1966 as a gift from the Hispanic Culture of Madrid as represented by the Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Fernando María Castiella y Maíz (<https://siris-artinventories.si.edu/ipac20/ipac.jsp?&profile=all&source=~!siartinventories&uri=full=3100001~!377915~!0#focus>, accessed 4 October 2021).

66 “¿por qué 500 años más tarde empezamos a revisar la historia de España en América y cuestionar la hispanidad, cuando desde su origen, si hay algo que trajo al continente americano fue la universidad, la civilización, occidente, valores que hoy siguen sustentando democracias liberales prósperas [sic]” (David Alandete, “Díaz Ayuso defiende el legado español en su visita a Washington,” *ABC* (28 September 2021), [https://www.abc.es/espana/madrid/abci-diaz-ayuso-defiende-legado-espanol-visita-washington-202109290214_noticia.html](https://www.abc.es/espana/madrid/abci-diaz-ayuso-defiende-legado-espanol-visita-washington-202109290214_noticia.html?ref=https://www.abc.es/espana/madrid/abci-diaz-ayuso-defiende-legado-espanol-visita-washington-202109290214_noticia.html), accessed 4 October 2021). See also Valentina di Liscia, “At New York’s Hispanic Society, Leader of Madrid Laments Indigenous Movement as an ‘Attack Against Spain,’” *Hyperallergic* (28 September 2021), <https://hyperallergic.com/681033/leader-of-madrid-laments-indigenous-movement-as-an-attack-against-spain/> (accessed 4 October 2021). Many thanks to my colleague Laura Morreale for this reference.

matured beyond the prejudices of the past. At the same time as *The Ministry of Time* traumatically rehearses national shame by witnessing and rejecting past injustices while also offering up its historical revision of Isabel – and adding a few contemporary injustices, as it does so – Vox rejects national shame in favor of revising the past, complete with expulsion, Reconquest and the eradication of religious difference as salvation.

Although the campaign for canonization seeks to turn Isabel into a global Catholic icon, stories about Isabel are overwhelmingly stories about Spain, what it means to be Spanish, what it is to share a history as such. They may be avowedly exclusive, as in Vox's vision of a "newly great" Christian Spain; or they might attempt a more liberal vision of inclusivity (and post-Franco artistic freedom) as in *The Queen of Spain*. What all of these 21st-century approximations of Isabel share – from the campy show-biz versions offered by the Miss Universe contest; to Fernando Trueba's Isabel as Macarena Granada, where historical accuracy takes a back seat to glamour and artistic license; to *Isabel* and *The Ministry of Time*'s religiously tolerant modern woman defying patriarchy; to the campaign for canonization's Catholic exemplar; to Santiago Abascal's homage to a bulwark against Islamification, where the appearance of historical accuracy and crowd-pleasing are equally important – is the Neo-medieval desire to present today's audiences with an Isabel who provides today's Spain and Spaniards a form of emotional catharsis and pride, rather than shame, in the eyes of the wider world. Yet just as each new recreation of Isabel is one held up by her creators for Spaniards to take pride in, each one may also provoke *vergüenza* due to the creators' glossing over of historical detail. Isabel's iconicity is infinitely pliable. Her presence on the page, screen, or in speeches is guaranteed to provoke strong feelings. Consequently, Desirée Cordero's Isabel is equally and easily available for appropriation by the ultra-right's banal nationalism and the campy commodification of a global beauty contest – and, perhaps, every subject-position (from national shame to celebration) in between.

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Index

- ABC*(newspaper) 332, 358
abadengo 238
 Abascal, Santiago 12, 335, 363, 364
 Abend Callahan, Leslie 264n26
 Abbasid 215
 Abraham Senior 222, 222n39, 223, 224, 225
 Abravanel, Isaac 216n17, 221n33, 224, 225, 226, 226n54
 Abravanel, Judah (León Hebreo) 175
actitud corporal 97
 Acuña 167
 Acuña, Fernando de, Viceroy of Sicily 188, 188n145
 Acuña, Luis de, Bishop of Burgos 241
 Acuña, Pedro de 167
 'Ād 215
adab 160
adelantado 37
 Adriano de Utrecht 82n49, 86
 Afonso, Count of Barcelos 199, 200n7
 Afonso, Prince of Portugal 164, 166, 185, 257, 258, 262, 264, 264n25, 265, 265n31, 268, 268n45, 270, 271n56, 273, 275, 276
 Afonso V, King of Portugal 193, 201, 202, 234, 241, 245, 252, 256, 286
 Africa 199, 201, 202, 203, 206, 207
 North 215
 sub-Saharan 207
 African 197
 coast 197, 199, 201, 202, 204, 211
 Agnes, Saint 108
agudeza 175
 Aguirre, Isabel 211n31
 Ahab, King of Israel 16, 217, 218, 232
 Ahasuerus/Ahashverosh, King 16, 222, 226, 226n57, 227, 229, 230
 Ahmed, Sarah 263, 263n22, 342n6
 Ainsworth, Maryan W. 138n35
 Airaldi, Gabriella 74n14, 76n20, 77n27, 80n40, 82, 84n60
 Al-Andalus (see also Andalucía/Andalusia) 115n7, 215n9, 215n11, 364, 364n63
 Alandete, David 365n66
 al-'Arabi al-'Uqayli, Muḥammad 214
 Alba de Liste 195
 Albión, Violante de 144n47
 Albuquerque, Leonor de 198
 Alcáçovas 135, 201, 202, 202n13
 -Trujillo, Treaties of 203
 Alcalá (de Henares) 210, 210n29
 University of 86, 87, 241
 Alcalá Gálvez, Ángel 258n9
 Alcántara 65n89
alcázar
 of Jerez de la Frontera 204
 of Segovia 51n55, 144n47
 of Sevilla 204
 Alegre Carvajal, Esther 93n5, 94, 94n8
 Alemán, Melchior 137n31
 Alexander (the Great) 150, 152n79
 Alexander VI, Pope 244, 246, 249, 256
 Alfons II, King of Aragon 226n54
 Alfons v *el Magnánimo*, King of Aragon
 Alfonso VI, King of Castile 358
 Alfonso VIII, King of Castile 284
 Alfonso x *el Sabio*, King of Castile 45n36, 158n3, 159, 163, 164, 221, 221n33, 261, 261n15, 301, 301n7, 324n82
 Alfonso, Prince of Asturias 51n55, 73, 74, 199, 259
 Algarbes (Algarves) 35n5, 325, 325n87
 Algerbi, Ibrahim 182
 Algezira 325, 325n87
 al-Hakam I, Amir 181n104
 Alhambra 216n16, 350
 Alicante 170
almadraba 204
 Almanzor 364, 364n63
 Al-Maqqarī (Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Maqqarī) 215, 215n10, 215n11, 215n15, 216, 217, 230
 Almería 205
almojarifazgo 204, 204n17
 Almoravid 358
 Alonso, Ana 358
 Alonso, Dámaso 308, 308n32
 Alonso, Fadrique 218, 219
 al-Sheikh al-Waṭṭāsī, Muḥammad 214
 Altamira, Rafael 309

- al-'Uqayli, Muḥammad al-'Arabī 214, 215,
215n9, 215n11
- Alvar Esquerra, Alfredo 253n39
- Álvarez Albalá, Carolina 3n4
- Álvarez de Toledo, García 176, 191
- Álvarez de Villasandino, Alfonso 163,
180n101
- Álvarez Gato, Juan 180, 183
- Álvarez Junco, José 302n10, 319, 319n65,
322n75, 324, 324n84, 326, 326n91, 336,
336n122, 336n123
- Alvarez, Mari-Tere 152n80
- Alvarnárez, Clara 200
- Álvaro de Portugal 182, 208
- Alvestad, Karl 13n53, 343n7, 346n15
- amancebado* 244
- Amaro, Alejandro 271n59, 271n60
- Amazonian 283
- Amelang, James 261n17, 268n46
- Amelek/Amalek 18, 230
- America 317, 317n59, 322, 365, 365n66
-n 14, 20, 198, 208, 211, 252, 304, 314,
315n54, 320, 329, 331, 356, 357, 360,
361n54, 362
-s 5, 13, 196, 198, 208, 211, 240, 252,
252n35, 300, 315n54, 332, 333, 341, 361
- amiga* 178
- amor cortés* 172, 183n117
- amor hereos* 173, 173n65
- amour courtois* 171, 172
- Ampudia, Pascual de, Bishop 246
- Andalucía/Andalusia (see also Al-
Andalus) 20n80, 152n80, 197, 198, 201,
203, 203n15, 204, 204n16, 204n17, 205,
205n19, 205n20, 207, 207n25, 208, 209,
210, 318, 363, 364, 364n63
- Andalusian 115n7
- Andrews, Julie 357
- Anes, Gonzalo 113n1
- angel/ángel 96, 96n16, 106, 106n40, 108,
108n46, 129, 138, 142n43, 144n51, 145n51,
166, 166n35, 167, 167n40, 168, 168n41,
169, 169n48, 236, 237, 351
- Anglo-Norman 190
- Anglo-Saxon 174
- annata* 56, 56n68
- Anne, Saint 10, 28, 91–112
Retable of 91–112
Triple 101, 102fig4.2, 105, 106, 108
- Annunciation 124, 124n17, 131fig.5-16,
137, 233
Feast of the 106
- Anríquez, Luís 268n45
- Antequera, Fernando de 198
- Antioch 190
- anti-Catholic 5, 304n17, 341
- anti-Franco 330n99, 331
- anti-Semitism 13, 183, 341, 345, 351, 352n29,
356, 357n47
- anti-Spanish 315, 315n54
- aporia* 3
- apostasy 17, 34, 39, 42, 44, 45, 51, 58
- apostate 35, 42, 45, 49, 50n53, 51, 55, 57
- Apostolic See 49n50, 53, 247
- Apulia 227n54
- Aquinas, Thomas, Saint 48n46
- Arab 160, 173n64, 176, 181n104
-ic 16, 88, 173n65, 181n104, 214, 215n10,
216, 216n16, 324n79
- Aragon/Aragón 2, 2n3, 26n104, 35, 35n5,
35n6, 35n7, 36, 36n9, 40, 40n24, 41,
53n60, 57n70, 59n75, 73, 75, 78n30, 101,
103, 107, 131n22, 135n25, 144, 144n50, 149,
151n73, 154n88, 154n89, 163, 180, 181, 183,
193, 196, 198, 201, 213, 216, 219, 220, 221,
222, 222n38, 223, 224, 238, 246, 248, 253,
254, 255, 258, 259, 260, 262, 274, 276,
278, 279, 284, 286, 291, 300n3, 300n4,
309, 313, 318, 318n62, 318n63, 320, 321,
322, 324, 325, 325n87, 326, 328, 328n94,
329, 332, 332n105, 332n106, 333, 343, 355
- Aragón y Milán, Ángela de 167
- Aragonese 111n52, 154, 163, 172, 195, 199n6,
206, 242, 256n4, 291, 300, 321, 326,
326n91, 333, 337, 344
Chapel, 233
- Aram, Bethany 73, 73n7
- Arberry, A.J. 176n79
- Arbeteta Mira, Letizia 148n60
- Areces, Carlos 360
- Arenas García, Rafael 335, 335n117, 335n118
- Arévalo 73, 75, 76n17, 199, 200, 263
- Arévalo, Rodrigo Sancho de 301, 302n7
- Arias Dávila, Diego 51, 51n55, 51n57, 52n59
- Arias Dávila, Elvira 51, 51n55, 52n59
- Arias Dávila, Juan, Bishop 49, 50n51, 51n55,
52, 52n59, 59n77
- Arias del Villar, Juan 54n63, 61n83

- Ariès, Philippe 262, 262n19
 Aristotle 3
 Poetics 279, 279n1
 Rhetoric 42n27, 56, 56n69, 60, 60n81, 69, 69n101
 Arízaga Bolumburu, Beatriz 205n18
 Arnalte 187
 Arras 144n51, 145, 145n52, 155
ars combinatoria 298
Ars moriendi 262n18, 269, 269n48, 262n49
 Arthur of Wales, Prince 257
 Arveragus 180
 Ascension 233, 237
 Asia 202, 204, 211
 Assman, Jan 348, 348n20
 Assumption, Feast of the 233
 Astorga 53, 185
 Asturias 318
 Prince of 110, 265n32
 Princess of 264
 Athens 325
 Atienza, Juan G. 252n36
 Aubrun, Charles v 165n31
Audiencia (Real) (see also High Court, *Chancillería*) 242, 320
 Augustine of Hippo, Saint 234, 245
aurea mediocritas (see also Golden Mean) 3
 Ausonius 88
 Austrian Dynasty (see also Hapsburg) 317
auto de fe 351, 354
 Avenida de Borbón 334n111
 Ávila 37n15, 137, 142n41, 165, 188, 266, 266n36, 267
 Avis, Isabel de 199
 Avneri, Zvi 223n43, 224n45
axedrez al viejo 183
axedrez de la dama 183
 Ayala, Leonor de 189
ayo 258n9, 274n65
 Azazel 228
 Azcárate, José María de 114n5, 114n6, 143n45, 147n58
 Azcona, Tarsicio de 49n47, 49n48, 49n49, 53n60, 53n61, 56n68, 107, 107n44, 114n4, 197n3, 234n4, 237, 239, 239n16, 239n17, 239n19, 240n20, 241n21, 242, 242n22, 242n23, 244n25, 244n28, 256n6, 258n8, 262n20, 266n33, 321n68
 Aznar, José María 362, 362n58
 Aznar Vallejo, Eduardo 208n23, 209n28
 Azores 202, 207
 BBC 363n60
 Baal 217, 218
 Baena, Juan Alfonso de 160, 160n12
 Babylon 16, 222, 227, 229
 Bacon, Francis (Viscount Saint Albans) 232, 232n1
 Badajoz 53
 Baeza, Gonzalo de 79n35
 Baghdad 215
 Baldwin, Prince of Burgundy 192
 Balearic Islands 35
 ballad (see also *romance*) 163, 169n44, 271, 271n56
 Bango Torviso, Isidro Gonzalo 156n94
 Bannon, Steve 336
 Baños, J.M. 269n48
 Baños Vallejo, Fernando 98, 98n20, 99n22
 Bar Shlomo, Abraham 223
 Barak 282
 Barbara, Saint 108
 Barcelona 15, 39, 40, 40n22, 41n25, 157, 160, 270, 270n51, 301, 302n7, 321, 325, 325n87, 328, 328n94, 333, 333n110, 333n111
 pel Canvi (party) 333
 Barcelos
 Count of 199, 200n7
 Isabel de 199, 200, 200n7
 Baroque 186, 226
 Barreira, David 364n63
 Barrientos, Lope de 219
 Barthélémy, Virginie 148n63
 Basque 59n75, 324n82, 331, 334n112, 335
 Country 21, 324n82, 329, 329n100, 330, 331, 335, 337
bastón 164
 Batalha, Monastery of 265
 Bayón Perales, María 154n89
 Bazán Díaz, Iñaki 201n11
 beatification 5, 20n80, 67n94, 68n97, 253n39, 360, 361, 361n53, 363
 Beatriz, Duchess of Braganza 201
 Beck, Emily S. 13, 13n53, 345, 346, 346n15
 Beem, Charles 25n101, 28n108, 29, 29n111, 30n114, 30n115
 Beer, Rudolf 144n47

- Beinart, Haim 222, 222n39, 223,
223n42, 224n44, 224n45, 224n47,
225n48, 226n53
- Bell, Aubrey F.G. 85n64
- belle dame sans merci* 173
- Bellomi, Paola 188n142
- Belozerskaya, Marina 114n3, 135n25, 148n62,
148n63, 150n64, 150n65, 154n89
- Beltrán de la Cueva 17, 178, 217n19, 256
- Beltraneja, La* 17, 110, 178, 197, 256, 256n5,
262n20, 282, 283, 285, 294
- Ben Saruk, Zechariah 230
- Ben-Shalom, Ram 217n19, 221n33
- Benavente, Countess of 236
- Benayahu, Meir 217n20, 218n20
- Benedict, St, Order of 245
- Benedictine 96n15, 245
- Benito Ruano, Eloy 142n41
- Benito-Vessels, Carmen 157n96
- Bennassar, Bartolomé 323n76
- Benton, John 171
- Berber 206
- Berenbaum, Michael 218n23
- Beresford, Andrew M. 165n32
- Bergenroth, Gustave Adolph 59, 60n78
- Berlin 133fig5.17, 357
- Bermejo, Bartolomé 135n25, 142, 154n89
- Bernal, Antonio-Miguel 209n28
- Bernáldez, Andrés 44, 44n34, 44n35, 47,
77n26, 149n61, 213, 213n1, 257, 257n7,
266, 266n34, 301, 302n7
- Bernardino, Saint 107
- Bernat de Marimon, Joan 40n22
- Berruguete, Pedro 124, 124n17, 125n17,
131fig5.16, 137, 137n29, 142
- Beteta, Gonzalo 57n70
- Bethencourt, Francisco 207n24
- Betraux, Émile 148n58
- Bianchini, Janna 31, 31n16, 31n17, 32n19
- Biblioteca Homo Legens 364n64
- Bickford, John Albert 168n45
- bien amar* 172, 172n62
- Bilbao 197n4, 202
- Binotti, Lucia 159n8, 323n78, 323n80
- Black Death (see also plague) 230, 269
- Black Legend (*Leyenda Negra*) 5, 315,
315n54, 341, 347, 362n60
- Blanca of Navarre 219
- Blas Guerrero, Andrés de 302n10,
303, 303n13, 319, 319n66, 329,
329n97, 329n98
- Blockmans, Wim 148n63, 149n64
- Blumenfeld-Kosinski, Renate 81n46
- Boabdil 214, 215, 215n9, 215n11, 216
- Boase, Roger 6, 6n22, 8, 8n29, 11, 11n44, 11n46,
18, 18n73, 30, 159n7, 162n18, 165n24,
165n29, 165n32, 166n34, 167n38, 170n50,
170n52, 171n54, 171n58, 173n64, 173n65,
174n73, 175n74, 176n82, 177n89, 178n95,
178n96, 180n101, 181n104, 181n107,
183n115, 183n116, 186n134, 188n142,
190n150, 190n151, 190n153, 191n154,
195n165, 195n168, 195n170, 195n174
- Bobadilla, Beatriz de 75, 75n17, 75n18, 77,
89, 90, 182
- Boethius 270
- Bohemia 142n43, 181n104
- bon'amors* 172
- Boniface VIII, Pope 49n50
- Book of Hours 4
- Booth, Wayne C. 281, 281n5
- Borbón, Isabel de 187
- Borchert, Till-Hilger 149n64
- Bordonada, Pablo 323n76
- Borja, Francisco Tomás de 111n52
- Borja, Rodrigo de (see also Alexander VI,
Pope) 111n52, 249
- Born Cultural Center 330n99
- Boruchoff, David A. 4, 4n8, 4n9, 5, 5n13,
9, 9n34, 9n38, 12, 12n51, 16, 17, 17n66,
17n67, 17n68, 17n69, 21, 21n85, 23,
23n92, 23n93, 23n96, 26, 27, 43n31,
57n71, 196n3, 300, 312n42, 341, 341n2
- Boscán, Juan 70, 71, 71n106, 160
- Bosch, Jeronimus 142
- Botta, Patrizia 187n137
- Botticelli, Sandro 142
- Bourbon dynasty 251, 328
- Bouts, Dirk 142, 143
- Braganza (Bragança) 199, 200n7, 201, 208,
209, 209n27
- Beatriz of 201
- Duchess of 201
- Duke of 200n7, 208
- dynasty 199
- Isabel of 200n7

- Brann, Ross 218n21
 Bravo Arriaga, María Dolores 312, 312n39,
 312n40, 312n44, 313n46
brazo 321
 Britain 257
 British Isles 197
 Brito, Álvaro de 268n45
 Brooke, Alice 295, 296, 296n11, 297
 Brooke, Christopher N.L. 179n100
 Brown, Jonathan 135n25, 155n89
 Brussels 125n17, 145, 145n53, 146, 335
 Buchianico, Count of 164
buen amor 172
 Buendía, Conde de 289
 Burgalese 123
 Burgos 37n15, 51, 79n36, 91, 92fig4.1, 93, 94,
 95, 95n12, 102fig4.2, 108, 117, 117n11,
 131n22, 135, 191, 202, 241, 321
 Cathedral 91, 91n1, 91n2
 Alonso de 111
 Burgundian 114n3, 148, 149, 149n65, 150,
 153n80, 154, 156
 Burgundy 113, 148n63, 149n64, 153, 154, 185,
 192, 259, 260
 Burrus, Victoria 180
 Bustani, Alfredo 216n16
 Butler, Judith 254, 255n2
 Byrne, Susan 81n46
 Byzantine 142, 142n43, 235, 241
 Byzantium 152

 Caba, María Y. 295, 296n11
 Cabra, Count of 191
 Cabrera, Andrés de 51n55, 75, 76, 77n26
 Cabrera Sánchez, Margarita 185n130,
 266n36, 267n39, 267n40, 267n41
 Cádiz 203, 204, 205, 205n19, 209n28
 Bay of, 204, 205, 210
 Cortes of 364, 364n63
 Marqués of 203, 204
Caesarissimus (see also Manuel I, King) 166
 Caillois, Roger 174
 Calatayud 321
 Calatrava 65n89, 287, 288
 Order of 286
 Calderón Ortega, José Manuel 268n44
 California 3, 3n4
 Calisto 173, 173n67

 Calvete, Lorenzo (Fray Juan de
 Calvete) 49n51, 50n51
 Calvo, Ricardo 183n13
 Calvo Castellón, Antonio 137n30,
 138n36, 142n42
Camarera 82n52
 Camón Aznar, José 258n9
 Campbell, Lorne 132n24, 135n25, 146n56,
 150n70, 155n92
 Campbell, Ysla 296n11
 Campin, Robert 146
 Campoamor, Ramón de 314
 Canarian 13, 14, 205, 206, 207, 208, 211
 Canary Islands 30, 124n17, 197, 202, 205, 206,
 240, 325, 331
canción 10, 104, 165, 176, 177, 179, 180, 184,
 184n125
cancionero 85, 104, 160n12, 162, 162n16,
 162n17, 162n18, 163, 163n19, 164n24,
 165, 168n43, 172n62, 175n75, 178n83,
 177n91, 180n101, 186n132, 186n133, 187,
 187n137, 188n143, 190, 190n153, 195n174,
 271n57, 275
 Candia 216
 Candlemas 233
 canonization 5, 6, 11, 67n93, 67n94, 68n97,
 251, 252, 253n39, 313, 342, 361, 363,
 365, 366
 Cantabrian 162
Cantar de Mio Cid 316
Canviem Reis Catòlics 333
 Canyamars, Joan de 270
cañada 152n80
 Cañas Gálvez, Francisco de Paula 132n24
 Cape Bojador 203
Capilla del Condestable (see also Constable of
 Castile Chapel) 28, 91–112
 Capsali, Eliyahu 16, 18, 216, 216n17, 217,
 217n19, 217n20, 218, 218n25, 219,
 219n26, 219n27, 220, 220n30, 221,
 221n32, 222, 222n36, 222n37, 222n38,
 223, 223n40, 223n41, 224, 224n46, 225,
 225n49, 225n50, 225n51, 225n52, 226,
 226n54, 226n55, 226n56, 227, 227n57,
 227n58, 227n59, 228, 228n60, 228n61,
 229, 230
 Carberry, John, Cardinal 362
 Cardaillac, Louis 258n9

- Cárdenas, Gutierre de, Marqués de Villena 282
- Cardinal Virtues 274
- Caribbean 14, 19, 198, 211, 212n32, 253, 256
- Carlos v, Emperor 275, 275n72, 304
- Carlos v* series 343
- Carlos of Viana, Prince 220, 259
- Carlson, Alisa M. 138n37
- Carmenta (see also Nicostrata) 84
- Carr, Derek 270n54
- Carreras i Candi, Francesch 40n22, 40n23, 41n25
- Carrete Parrondo, Carlos 52n59
- Carriazo Rubio, Juan Luis 204n17
- Carrillo, Alonso/Alfonso, Archbishop 188, 252
- Carta de Privilegio* 309, 310fig12.3, 310fig12.4
- Cartagena, Alonso/Alfonso de 101n28, 221, 221n35
- Cartagena, Pedro de 11, 183, 184, 191
- Carthusian 96n10, 117, 131, 131fig5.16, 245
- Cartuja de Miraflores* 94, 96, 114, 117, 117n11, 120, 120fig5.6, 120n12, 121fig5.7, 122fig5.8, 123fig5.9, 124n15, 124n16, 124n17, 125fig5.10, 126fig5.11, 126n18, 126n19, 127fig5.12, 128fig5.13, 129, 131n21, 131n22, 132, 132n22, 137, 138, 146, 151, 151n76, 156
- Casado Alonso, Hilario 197n4
- Casares 205
- Casey, Nicholas 354n43
- Castañeda, Countess of 164
- Castellví, Francesc de 183
- Castiella y Maíz, Fernando María 364n65
- Castiglione, Baldesar (Baldessare) 8, 9n33, 34, 70, 70n103, 70n104, 70n105, 71n106, 74, 76n24, 88, 160, 176, 176n81, 275
- Castile (see also Castilla), 2, 7, 10, 15, 16, 17, 29, 30, 35, 36, 37, 41, 42, 42n28, 44, 51, 62, 67, 70, 73, 78n32, 81n46, 93, 97, 100, 101, 103, 105, 107, 110, 115n7, 117n11, 120, 131n22, 132, 135, 135n25, 137, 138n35, 143n45, 144, 146, 149, 152n80, 153, 154, 156, 157, 165, 166n34, 180, 181, 193, 194, 196, 197, 197n4, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 202n13, 205, 208, 209n27, 213, 213n5, 214, 215, 216n16, 217, 217n19, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 226, 238, 239, 246, 248, 251, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261n15, 263, 265, 268, 270, 274n68, 276, 277, 285n7, 300n3, 300n4, 309, 313, 316, 318, 318n62, 318n63, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 326n90, 327, 328, 331, 332, 332n105, 333, 337, 343, 352, 355
- Admiral of 164, 169, 198, 218, 219
- and León 35, 131n22, 144, 318, 332
- Chancellor of 273
- Constable of 91, 94, 94n6, 178, 265
- Cortes of 69, 300n3
- Royal Bend of 151n76
- Castilian 13, 14, 15, 16, 32, 37n16, 71, 74, 78, 78n30, 81, 87, 90n94, 91, 93, 95, 98n21, 99, 101n28, 104, 105, 106, 108n46, 109, 109n48, 110, 112, 114, 124n15, 132, 137, 143, 148, 151n74, 152, 153, 156, 157, 160, 162, 163, 165n32, 193, 195, 197, 197n4, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 206, 207, 208, 210, 211, 214, 224, 226, 230, 233, 234, 235, 236, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 248, 252, 253, 268, 269, 271, 273, 284, 286, 289, 290, 300n3, 300n4, 301, 318, 320, 321, 322, 323, 323n81, 324n82, 325, 326, 328, 329, 331, 332, 332n105, 333, 337, 344, 358
- Capilla* 233
- ization 333
- Castilla (see also Castile) 16n65, 35n5, 44n35, 46n38, 49n51, 51n55, 53n60, 54n63, 63n84, 65n89, 67n94, 71n106, 72n5, 73n8, 94n6, 97n17, 114n6, 132n22, 137n29, 144n50, 146n57, 152n73, 159n8, 185n130, 195n170, 197n4, 202n11, 207n23, 257n7, 258, 261n16, 261n17, 267n40, 279, 282, 285, 286, 289, 292, 313n46, 325n87, 325n89, 327n92, 327n93, 328n94, 332n106, 352n35
- Castilla y Aragón, Juan de 107
- Castilla y Fonseca, Pedro de (*el Mozo*) 189
- Castillo, Hernando del 85
- Castillo Oreja, Miguel Ángel 153n83
- Castrillón, Álvarez de 113n1
- Castro, Américo 308, 313
- Catalan 59n75, 74, 165n32, 190, 198, 269, 324n82, 326, 331, 331n103, 332, 332n105, 332n106, 333, 334, 334n112
- Civil War 255
- Catalán, Diego 271n56
- Catalina de Aragón (see also Catherine of Aragón) 78n33

- Catalina (Catherine, Katherine) of Lancaster 198
- Catalina of Portugal, Queen 262n20
- Catalonia 21, 221, 250, 267, 318, 324n82, 328, 329, 330, 330n99, 330n100, 331, 332, 332n105, 333, 334, 334n112, 334n113, 335, 337
- Generalitat of 267
- nism 335
- Cátedra, Pedro M. 48n46
- Catherine of Alexandria, Saint 234
- Catherine of Aragon, Queen (see also Catalina de Aragón) 73, 80n40, 87, 87n75, 137, 150, 257
- Catholic 1, 2, 4, 6, 9, 21, 39, 39n21, 41, 41n25, 41n26, 45, 47n40, 48, 49, 53, 53n60, 55, 55n65, 56n65, 57, 57n70, 57n72, 61, 62, 64, 65, 228, 235, 238, 240, 246, 248, 249, 253, 256, 265, 312, 313, 342, 343, 361, 362, 363, 363n61, 365
- Church 5, 20, 21, 232, 233, 237, 238, 239, 245, 248, 251, 361
- ism 18, 224, 252, 282, 303, 304, 306, 313, 322, 343, 365
- King 194, 194n166, 266n35, 312
- Monarchs (see also *Reyes Católicos*) 2, 20, 21, 22, 42, 43n31, 74n13, 81n44, 91, 104, 110n51, 111n52, 144n47, 160n11, 162, 171n59, 176, 186, 186n135, 191, 193, 213, 216, 219, 222n39, 223, 224, 225, 246n29, 256, 267, 274n68, 276, 277, 278, 281, 292, 294, 296, 296n11, 298, 299, 299n3, 300, 300n4, 301, 302, 303, 304, 306, 306n20, 307, 308, 309, 312, 313, 316, 317, 318, 319, 321, 322, 326, 327, 329, 331, 332, 333, 336, 337, 338, 349, 350n26, 351, 353
- Queen 9, 30, 66, 93, 96, 104, 105, 105n39, 108n46, 109, 110, 111, 131n21, 159n7, 194, 199, 234, 254–78, 339, 341, 341n5, 342, 353, 358, 360, 362
- católico/a* (see also Catholic) 45n37, 52n57, 53n61, 61n82, 62n84, 63n84, 63n86, 64n89, 82n53, 253, 265n33, 332n105
- Catz, Rebecca 209n27
- Caunedo del Potro, Betsabé 197n4
- La Cava 282
- Cecilia, Saint 234
- censorship 304n17, 355, 358
- Centellas, Francina 169, 169n48, 177n89
- Centelles, Isabel de 169n47
- Centelles, Jaime de 177n89
- Ceñete, Marquesa de 84n60
- Cerdaña 325
- Cereceda, Feliciano 65, 65n90
- Cereta, Laura 72
- Cerrada, A. 78n31
- Cerrillo, Pedro C. 168n43
- Cervantes, Miguel de 111, 282, 282n6, 308
- Cervera
- treaties of 213
- Cervera, César 332, 332n106, 333, 333n107
- Chacón, Francisco 135, 135n27, 136, 136fig5.20, 137
- Chacón, Gonzalo (de) 73, 200, 201
- Chancillería* (see also *Audiencia*, High Court) 242
- Chapuis, Julien 138n35
- Charles I, King of Spain (see also Charles v, Holy Roman Emperor) 42, 111n52, 319
- Charles v, Holy Roman Emperor (see also Carlos v) 42, 240, 317n60
- Chartier, Roger 262n18, 269n49
- Chaucer, Geoffrey 171n57, 181, 181n104
- chauvinism 5, 341
- Checa Cremades, Fernando 114n6, 115n6, 128n20, 136n28, 137n32, 148n60
- chess 7, 88, 161, 174, 181, 182, 183, 183n114, 196, 196n2, 212, 345
- Childers, William 111
- Childs, Wendy R. 197n4
- Chinese 323n79
- Chipiona 203
- Christ 9, 50n51, 60, 61, 61n82, 108, 108n46, 184, 184n122, 233, 236, 256, 274, 134fig5.19, 140fig.5.22
- ology 150
- Christian 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 18, 19, 20n80, 31, 34, 34n1, 35, 35n8, 38, 39, 43n31, 44, 45, 46, 46n39, 47, 47n44, 48, 49, 49n51, 50n51, 52, 53, 55, 56n65, 57, 57n70, 60, 64, 65, 66, 74, 86, 87n78, 91, 100, 103, 106, 112, 116, 152n80, 156, 156n94, 179, 190, 191, 215, 216, 216n16, 217, 217n19, 221n33, 221n35, 232, 234, 235, 236, 240, 244, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 265, 269, 274, 301n6, 304, 323, 341, 345, 346, 351n31, 353, 360, 365

- Christian (*cont.*)
 -ity 4, 5, 49n46, 65, 75, 75n19, 232, 238,
 242, 246, 247, 253, 256, 341, 351
 -ization 156n94
 virtues 274
- Christmas 105, 191, 193, 233, 235
- Church 5, 20, 21, 31, 45, 46, 49n50, 54, 58, 93,
 101, 179, 180, 232, 234, 235, 237, 238, 239,
 240, 241, 242, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248,
 251, 269, 281, 361, 362, 363
- El Cid 282
- El Cid* (movie) 356, 358, 358n49
- Cieto Alcaide, Víctor 153n83
- Cifuentes, Count of 205
- Cigales 51n57
- cimera* 178n92, 186
- Cisneros, Francisco Jiménez de, Cardinal
 (Archbishop of Toledo and Chancellor
 of Castile) 16, 22, 89, 241, 246, 273,
 277, 352
- Cistercian 245
- cisternado* 98, 99n22
- citizenship 19, 354, 354n42, 354n43
- Ciudadanos (party) 333, 335
- Civil War Archive (Salamanca) 330n99
- Clare, Saint 245
- Clarisas* 245
- Clemencín, Diego 73n9, 192n155, 234,
 234n5, 314
- Cleopatra 357
- Coimbra 202, 256n5
- Colau, Ada 333, 333n11
- Collantes de Terán, Antonio 209n28
- Colmeiro, José 350n27
- Colmeiro, Manuel 261n16
- Colmenares, Diego de 49n51, 50n52
- Coloma, Juan de 56n66
- Colonia, Juan de 120, 120fig5.6, 121fig5.7,
 122fig5.8, 123fig.5.9
- Colonia, Simón de 114, 120, 120fig5.6, 120n12,
 121fig5.7, 122fig5.8, 123fig.5.9
- Columbus, Christopher 3n4, 14, 19, 167n38,
 198, 200n7, 202n13, 207, 208, 209,
 209n27, 210, 210n29, 211, 211n30, 253,
 256, 322, 343, 344, 348
- comedia nueva* 294
- Comisión Isabel la Católica 20, 361, 363
- commedia dell'arte* 315n54
- communism 299n2, 307n25
- Communist 362n60
- comuneros* 89
- Comunidades* 251
- Conceptionist (see also Immaculate
 Conception) 101, 106
- Conchillos, Lope de 278, 278n79
- Consejo Real* (see also Royal
 Council) 242, 320
- Consejo Superior de Investigaciones
 Científicas 361
- Constable of Castile Chapel 91–112
- Constantine, Emperor 106
- Constantinople 231
- Constanza (Constance) 198
- Constitution
 -al Court 334
 of 1812 328, 329
 of 1978 330, 337
- contador mayor* 51, 51n57, 224
- Contreras, Juana de 85
- Contreras Jiménez, María Eugenia 50n51,
 51n56, 52n58, 59n77
- Convergència i Unió (CiU) 335n115
- conversion, forced 89, 343, 361
- converso* 11n42, 13, 17, 38, 40, 40n22, 42, 43,
 43n31, 44, 44n34, 47, 48, 49, 49n51, 51,
 52n59, 104, 104n36, 159, 183, 183n117, 216,
 220n31, 221, 221n35, 225n48, 226, 248,
 249, 253n38, 345, 350, 351n31, 353
- copa* 164
- Cordero, Desirée 339, 340fig.13.1, 341,
 357, 366
- Cordoba/Córdoba 176, 181n104, 266n36, 267,
 289, 325, 364, 364n63
- Córdoba, Martín de 73, 84
- Corfu 226n54
- Coria, Count of 176
- La corona partida* 343
- Coronado Ruiz, Carlota 348n21
- Corporales Leal, Carolina 306n21
- Corpus Christi 233
- Correa da Serra, José Francisco 264n25
- corregidor* 37, 37n13
- corsair 201
- Corsica 325
- Corteguera, Luis R. 75n18
- cortes* 37, 37n13, 37n17, 38n18, 40, 41, 46n38,
 51n57, 62, 63n84, 69, 261, 261n16, 300n3,
 321, 328, 329n96, 364, 364n63

- Cortés Pizano, Fernando 124n15
cortesía (see also *courtesy*) 9, 70n104, 74n15, 77, 159n5, 160n9
cortez'amor 172
 Coruña, Count of 187
 Corvin, Otto von 85, 86
 Council for Christian Unity 20n80, 360
 Counter-Reformation 304
coup d'état 303
courtesy (see also *cortesía*) 9, 70, 74, 159, 160, 172, 178, 261, 288, 291
couture 342
 Covarrubias Horozco, Sebastián de 71n107, 168n46, 193n159, 324n81
 Crete 216, 230
 Cromberger, Jacob 105n39
 Crosas, Francisco 91, 91n2, 109, 109n48
crusade (*cruzada/crusada*) 17, 18, 54, 54n64, 55n64, 56, 64n88, 101n28, 116, 207n24, 342, 346, 346n14
 Cruz, Diego de la 96, 124, 128fig.5.13
 Cruz, Penélope 356fig.13.2, 359fig.13.3, 355, 357, 360
crypto-Jew (see also *Judaizer*, *judaizante*)
 Cuenca 64, 111, 239, 244
 Cull, John 173n66
 Cupid 161, 161n13, 194
 Curia 34, 41, 48n46, 55, 66, 67n93, 239, 242
 Czaplicka, John 348n20
- D'Alagno, Lucrezia 163
 D'Alagno, Mariano, Count of Buchianico 163, 164
 D'Espés, Esperanza 169, 169n48, 170
 D'Espés, Ramón, Majordomo 169n47
 D'Urries, Hugo 165
- dama* 75n19, 75n20, 82n52, 83, 93n5, 161n13, 161n14, 164n24, 166, 166n35, 169n48, 183, 184n22, 184n125, 196
de honor 358n48
- Damme, Jan van 124n15
 dancing 161, 174, 185
 Daniel 217, 225, 229
 book of 217, 225
 Darius the Mede 224, 225
 David, King 188, 226
 Dávila, María 186n136, 188, 189
 De la Cerda y de la Vega, Luis, Count and Duke of Medinaceli 203
- De la Cueva, Beltrán 17, 178, 217n19, 256
El Debate (newspaper) 252
 Deborah 282
 Del Castillo, Enríquez 23n90, 340
 Delmarcel, Guy 128n20, 144n47, 145n51, 146n56, 151n70, 152n73
dénouement 280, 292
derecho público castellano 321
 Devaney, Thomas 285n7
 Devil, the 18, 190, 214
 Deyermond, Alan 74n13, 85n61, 174n68, 187n137
- Deza, Diego de, Archbishop of Salamanca 246, 273n65
 Di Liscia, Valentina 365n66
 Diamandouros, Paraskevas Nikiforos 330n100
 Díaz Ayuso, Isabel 364, 365n66
 Díaz-Diocaretz, Myriam 82n53
 Díaz de Montalvo, Alonso/Alfonso 46, 46n38, 242
 Díaz de Toledo, Fernán 219
 Diego/Diogo, Duke of Viseu 208, 209n27
 Díez Borque, José María 313
 Díez Garretas, María Jesús 185n129, 192n156
 Dinshaw, Carolyn 342, 342n6
 Dionis, King of Portugal 199n6
Dios (see also *God*) 11n42, 11n43, 37n17, 38n17, 38n18, 40n20, 42n25, 48n47, 53n60, 57n70, 65n89, 66n91, 66n92, 84n58, 104n36, 110n49, 168n41, 168n42, 266n34, 271, 274n69, 278n79, 312n38, 325n87, 353n40
- disimular* 267, 275, 275n74
 Divine Office 233, 236, 237
 Divine Providence 278
divisa 165, 171n59, 185n129, 186, 186n135, 187, 189, 190, 194n165, 194n166
dobra (see also *doubloon*) 235
 Domínguez Bordona, J. 43n31
 Domínguez Casas, Rafael 114n5, 116n9, 117n10, 135n25, 137n31, 149n65, 153n81, 153n83, 195n169, 234n6
 Domínguez Rodríguez, Ana 221, 221n33, 221n34
 Dominic, Saint 234
 Dominican 34, 35n7, 36, 36n9, 246
Don Quijote 308
 Donaldson, E. Talbot 171

- Dorado, Bernardo 85
 Dorothy, Saint 108, 109, 109n48
 doubloon (see also *dobla*) 287
 dragon's blood 206
 dress 1, 15, 126, 145, 148, 149, 150, 157n96, 185, 191, 219, 244, 264, 284, 288, 289, 290, 291, 309, 316n55, 339, 340fig.13.1
 Dronke, Peter 171n60
 Drumond Braga, Paulo 264n25, 265n31
 Duarte, King of Portugal 199
 Duché-Gavet, Véronique 181n105
 Dueñas 289, 291
 Duits, Rembrandt 142n43
dulce et utile 294
 Dunn, Oliver 201n29
 Durán, Alphonsus María 362n59
 Durán, Gonzaga 333n110
 Dutch 269
 Dutton, Brian 160n12, 162, 162n17, 173n66, 271n57
 Dyballa, Katrin 132n24

 EAJ-PNV (Euzko Alderdi Jeltzalea / Partido Nacionalista Vasco) 335n15
 ERC (Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya) 333
 ETA (*Euskadi Ta Askatasuna*) 330
 Earenfight, Theresa 25, 251n01, 251n02, 261n04, 271n06, 281n07, 291n10, 321n18, 321n20, 78n33, 78n34, 79n36, 83n56, 84n60, 87n74, 87n75, 213, 213n2, 213n3, 213n4, 213n5
 Early Modern 3, 3n5, 5n16, 251n01, 271n05, 50n51, 75n18, 79n36, 88n80, 98n20, 138n37, 157n96, 207n25, 214, 216n17, 232, 241, 246, 248, 257n6, 262, 269, 275, 278, 294, 342, 344, 362
 Easter 166, 191, 233
 Eve 234
 Sepulcher 234
edict of faith 249
edict of grace 34, 40n22, 249
 Edwards, John 14, 14n59, 15n60, 18, 18n72, 19, 19n74, 31, 80n40, 197n3, 246n29, 251n34, 252n36, 253n38, 258n8, 281n4
 Egido, Aurora 316n56
 Egypt 108, 171
 Einbinder, Susan 230
 Eisler, Riane 99
 Elisa Moragas i Badia (street) 333
 Elizabeth, Saint 108
 Elizabeth I, Queen of England, Wales, and Ireland 6, 181, 232, 314, 315
 Els Comuns (party) 333
 Els Quinze 333n111
 Elvira, Doña (daughter of El Cid) 282
En Ávila por la A 165
 Encina, Juan del 77, 159, 159n5, 161, 161n14, 168n44, 170n53, 195, 195n172, 195n173, 237n14, 268n45, 271
 England 6, 60n78, 78n33, 79n36, 87, 105n37, 150, 154, 181, 185, 197n4, 232, 233, 237, 238, 243, 302, 309n35, 314
 English 10n39, 87, 87n74, 95n13, 137, 149, 149n69, 168n46, 174, 196n3, 198, 199, 234, 238, 257, 323n79, 354n43, 359, 363
 Enric of Aragon 40, 59n75
 Enrique II, King of Castile (Enrique de Trastámara) 163, 219
 Enrique III, King of Castile 163, 198
 Enrique IV, King of Castile 7, 37n14, 52n57, 73n10, 74, 75, 81n46, 157, 159, 178, 191, 192n156, 197, 199, 200, 200n7, 217n19, 235, 239, 248, 252, 255, 256, 280, 282, 314, 318
 Enríquez, Alonso, Admiral of Castile 164, 219
 Enríquez, Francisca 170
 Enríquez, Juana 198, 219, 220
 Enríquez de Guzmán, Enrique de, Duke of Medina Sidonia 195, 203, 205
 Enríquez de Luna, Enrique 195
 Enríquez de Luna, Teresa 195
 Enríquez de Mendoza, Fadrique, Admiral of Castile 169, 198
 Enríquez de Mendoza, Mencía, Countess of Castañeda 164
 Epiphany 235
 Erasmus 87
Eros 173n65
 Escartí, Vicent-Josep 169n48
 Escobedo, Juan de 321
 Escrivá de Balaguer, Josemaría 361n53
espada 164
 Espan (see also Hispan, Ispan) 221
 Espina, Alfonso de 44n34, 50n51
 Estal, Juan Manuel del 35n6
 Esther 222, 227, 228, 229n62, 229n65, 230n67

- book of 16, 222, 222n38, 226, 226n57, 227,
 228, 229, 229n62, 230
 Queen 16, 217
 Estúñiga, María de 84
 Estúñiga, Tristán de 170n53
 Eucharist 96, 233
 Eugenius IV, Pope 63n85
 Europe 12, 15, 25, 25n101, 25n102, 26n104,
 27n105, 28n107, 29n110, 31, 32n118, 72,
 73n7, 78n30, 80, 101n28, 132, 137n34,
 138n37, 142n43, 150, 152n80, 153n82,
 154, 156, 157, 166n34, 179, 197, 198, 207,
 207n25, 217, 233, 237, 238, 241, 243, 246,
 251, 262, 315, 330n100, 332n105, 357, 364
 European 8, 20, 31, 113, 114, 114n3, 114n5, 135,
 135n25, 137, 138, 143, 145, 147, 148, 149,
 149n65, 150, 150n70, 152, 153, 154, 155,
 156, 158, 162, 171n54, 171n60, 173n64,
 181n04, 188, 196, 197, 198, 199, 205, 206,
 206n21, 208, 211, 239, 240, 243, 244, 248,
 249, 308, 309n35, 315, 330, 335, 346
 Union (EU) 336
 evangelization 5, 252, 256, 345, 361
 Eve (Eva) 214
ex machina 289
exemplum 66
 Exodus, book of 230
expolio 56
 Expulsion 12, 16, 18, 19, 213, 217, 220, 220n31,
 221, 222, 223n39, 223n42, 224, 224n44,
 224n45, 224n47, 225, 225n48, 225n50,
 227n53, 228, 229, 230, 253, 281, 295, 309,
 309n35, 343, 346, 346n14, 347, 349, 350,
 353, 354, 355, 357, 361, 362, 365
 Edict of 222
 Extremadura 318, 322

 Faber, Sebastian 350n27, 350n28
 Fabra, Isabel 169n47
facha 317n60
 Facinger, Marion 26n103, 26n104
 Falange 6
 Falangist/*falangista* 299n2, 306n20
 Fancelli, Domenico 266
fascēs 194n167
fascis 194n167
 Fascism 33
 Fascist 20, 194, 194n167, 299n2, 306, 356
 Federación de Comunidades de Judíos de
 España (FCJE) 351n29
 Feistner, Edith 179
 Felicity, Saint 109n48
 Felipe III, King of Spain 282, 296, 297
 Felipe IV, King of Spain 316
 feminist 24, 25, 25n101, 78n30, 82n53, 85n61,
 213, 255n2, 296, 317, 347, 352
 Fenollar, Bernat 183
 Ferdinand/Fernando II *el Católico*, King of
 Aragon and Sicily 14, 20, 21, 36n11,
 75n18, 78n32, 80n40, 85, 87, 197n3,
 200n7, 245n29, 274n68, 281n4, 299,
 299n3, 300, 300n3, 303, 306, 307, 308,
 309, 312, 312n38, 313, 316, 317, 318, 319,
 321, 322, 323, 324, 326, 326n90, 327, 328,
 332, 333, 337, 343
 Fernández Álvarez, Manuel 15n61, 197n3,
 200n9, 200n10, 275n72, 333, 333n108,
 333n109, 337, 337n124
 Fernández Basanta, Fernando
 Nicolás 215n10
 Fernández de Córdoba, Diego, Count of
 Cabra 191
 Fernández de Córdoba,
 Gonzalo 364, 364n63
 Fernández de Córdoba, Marina 198
 Fernández de Córdova Miralles,
 Álvaro 235n7, 235n10
 Fernández de Heredia, Gonzalo 54n62
 Fernández de Heredia, Juan 41
 Fernández de Oviedo, Gonzalo 151n75,
 159n7, 160, 161n13, 167n40, 168, 168n41,
 168n42, 188n141, 194n166, 195n171,
 219, 266n36
 Fernández de Valera, Juan 270
 Fernández de Velasco, Pedro 91, 94, 111
 Fernández Gallardo, Luis 221, 221n35
 Fernando de Antequera (Fernando I, King of
 Aragón) 198
 Fernando III, Saint 364, 364n63
 Ferrandis, José 144n47, 144n49, 144n50
 Ferrante, Joan M. 171n61
 Ferrer, Vicente 48n46
 Fes/Fez 215n9
 "fifth column" 322n76
fin'amore 172
fin'amors 172

- Fink de Backer, Stephanie 89, 89n86, 89n89, 89n91, 89n92, 90n93
- fino amor* 172, 172n62
- First Commandment 275
- Fischer, Susan L. 20n80, 27n105
- Fita, Fidel 50n54, 239n18, 244n27
- Fité, Francesc 135n25, 154n89
- Flanders 96n17, 97, 114n6, 131n22, 135n25, 144n47, 152n80, 154, 154n88, 154n89, 162, 197, 309n35, 343
- War of 315n54
- Flandes, Juan de 124, 124n17, 129fig5.14, 130fig5.14, 130fig5.15, 132, 133fig5.18, 134fig5.19, 137n31, 137n34, 138, 138n35, 138n37, 139fig5.21, 140fig5.22, 142, 144n45, 147n57, 148n59, 149n65, 153n81
- flecha* 194, 306
- Fliegel, Stephen 148n63
- Florence 124n17, 164n23, 165
- Florentine 209
- Flores, Juan de 23n90, 75, 75n19, 77n27, 150n71, 341
- florin 235
- flos sanctorum* 98, 99, 99n22, 99n25, 100, 106n40, 110
- Fonseca, Alfonso de, Archbishop 50n54, 189, 241
- Fox, Diane 312
- Frades, Jordi 343
- Fraille, Guillermo 87n76
- France 26n103, 72, 135n25, 171, 181n105, 183, 185, 207n25, 217n19, 233, 237, 238, 243, 255, 259, 260, 264n26, 284, 285, 287, 291, 309n35
- Francis of Assisi, Saint 234, 245
- Franciscan 101, 101n28, 245, 246, 247
- Franco, Francisco, General 5, 6, 9, 20, 33, 65, 299, 299n2, 300, 303, 304, 304n17, 304n18, 306, 306n20, 307, 307n25, 307n29, 308, 309, 315, 317n60, 325n82, 330, 330n99, 331, 334n112, 337, 338, 339, 341, 350n27, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359fig13.3, 360, 361, 365
- Fundación Nacional 358n48
- Franco Silva, Alfonso 111, 111n53, 207n25
- Francoist 9, 339, 358, 359fig13.3
- Francomano, Emily 4, 4n6, 4n11, 5, 5n14, 5n15, 6, 6n17, 9, 9n37, 11, 11n45, 12, 12n48, 12n49, 13, 13n52, 16, 16n65, 17, 17n70, 19, 19n75, 19n76, 20, 20n79, 23n90, 24, 24n100, 33, 316n58
- Franquista* 299, 307
- Fredrick III, King (Holy Roman Emperor) 153
- Freiberg, Jack 154n88
- French 15, 74, 87, 148, 149, 150, 154, 157, 206, 226n54, 269, 287, 288, 323n79, 328
- Revolution 302
- Frenk, Margit 168n45
- Freud, Sigmund 175
- Freudian 175
- Friedman, Edward 8, 8n30, 32, 313n45
- Fundación Nacional Francisco Franco 358n48
- fueros* 321
- Fuerteventura 206
- Fusi, Juan Pablo 301, 302n7, 328, 328n95
- Gabriel, Archangel 106, 167
- La Gaceta del Sur* (newspaper) 252
- galán* 161n14, 178n92, 191, 293
- Galicia 35n5, 243, 245, 318, 324n82, 325, 331, 332, 334n112
- n 163, 271, 324n82, 331, 332, 334n112
- Galindo, Beatriz 79n36, 81n42, 81n43, 82, 82n52, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 159, 159n7
- Galm, John A. 180n103
- García-Baquero, Antonio 197n14
- García Cárcel, Ricardo 40n22, 41n26, 316n55
- García Casar, María 223n42, 224n44
- García García, Bernardo 114n6, 128n20, 148n60
- García Goldáraz, José, Archbishop of Valladolid 5, 361
- García Mercadal, José 193n161
- García Oro, José 233n2, 234n3
- García Ortiz, Eva 197n5
- García Santo-Tomás, Enrique 280n3
- García Soria, María 154n89
- García y García de Castro, Rafael 8, 8n31, 66, 66n92, 157n97
- Garriba, Aviva 187n137
- Garzón, José A. 183n112
- Gascon cape 291
- Gascón Pérez, Jesús 205n18

- Gascón Vera, Elena 80n40, 87, 87n77, 87n78
 Gatland, Emma 98, 98n21, 99, 99n23
 Generation of '98 308, 316
 Genesis 218, 222n38, 226n54, 227
 Genoa 175
 Genoese 209
 Gentile 16, 218
 George, Saint 234, 235
 Geraldino, Antonio 17, 54n64
 Gerli, Michael 75n19, 77n27, 90n94, 162n16, 171n59, 177n91, 180n101, 186n135
 German 86, 87, 113, 149, 153n85, 172, 179, 269, 286, 309n35
 film 357
 Germana de Foix, Queen of Aragon 166, 195, 276, 326
 Germany 135n25
 Gerson, Jean 269
 Ghent, Joos van 137
 Gibraltar 35n5, 325, 325n87
 Strait of 205
 Gillespie, Richard 334n112, 335n114, 335n116, 335n119
The Girl of Your Dreams (La niña de tus ojos) 356, 357, 360
 Girón, Pedro 285, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 295
 Girona 301
 Gitlitz, David 279n2, 296, 296n11, 297, 297n13
 Goceano 325, 325n87
 God (see also *Dios*) 4, 10, 11, 17, 21, 22, 37, 38, 39, 41, 41n25, 42, 43n31, 48, 48n46, 49, 52, 53, 57, 58, 64, 65, 66, 68, 84, 97, 98, 104, 105, 106, 108n46, 109, 168, 176, 184, 217, 218, 220, 221, 222, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 247, 260, 261, 266, 267, 268, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 289, 291, 303, 306, 312, 325, 353, 363, 363n61
 Mother of 11, 105, 106, 109, 363, 363n61
 Goebbels, Joseph 356, 356n47
 Golden Age 8, 32, 275, 313, 315, 316, 350
 Golden Gate 106
 Golden Legend 98, 98n21, 99, 99n23, 105, 106, 109
 Golden Mean 3
 Gomera 206
 Gómez, Fernán 312, 327
 Gómez de Castro, Alvar 88
 Gómez de Mercado y de Miguel, Francisco 321n69, 321n70, 322n73
 Gómez Imaz, Manuel 258n9
 Gómez Molleda, Marí Dolores 86n67
 Gómez Moreno, Ángel 81n44, 99n25
 Gómez Moreno, Manuel 135n27, 257n7
 Gómez Redondo, Ángel 105, 105n39
 Gonzaga, Francisco 107
 González Arévalo, Raúl 209n28
 González Arce, José Damián 197n4, 204n17
 González Cruz, David 205n20
 González Cuenca, Joaquín 160n12
 González Dávila, Gil 85
 González de Mendoza, Pedro, Cardinal 50n54, 110, 110n51, 210
 González Ramos, Roberto 147n58
 González Rolán, Tomás 22n87, 269n48, 269n49, 271n58, 272n61
 González Zalacaín, Roberto J. 209n28
 Good Friday 31, 235
 Goodman, Anthony 153n82
 Gordian knot 194
 Gordon, Bernard 173, 173n66
 Gornall, John 186, 196n169
 Gospel 101n28, 105, 174, 236, 237
 Goth 300n3, 304, 315
 -ic 113, 114, 114n5, 114n6, 115n7, 116n8, 120, 120n12, 135n25, 151n74, 154n89, 156, 285, 301, 301n7
Gozos de Santa María (altarpiece) 96, 110
 Grace, Kat 362, 363
 Gracia Dei, Pedro de 161, 161n15
 Gracián, Baltasar 1, 315, 316
gracioso 283, 287, 294
 grammar 82, 323, 323n79, 348
 Gran Canaria 206
 Graña Cid, María del Mar 72n5, 73n8, 78n31, 88n84
 Granada 7, 8, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17, 35, 37, 42, 45, 45n37, 46, 54n64, 76n20, 77, 80n43, 89, 90, 93, 94, 111, 113n1, 116, 132, 133fig5.18, 136, 136fig5.20, 138n36, 144n47, 148, 151n74, 156, 157, 181, 182, 195, 196, 200n7, 204n17, 205, 207, 207n25, 210n29, 213, 214, 215, 215n9, 215n10, 216, 216n16, 217, 221, 226, 228, 230, 234, 234n4, 240, 242,

- Granada (*cont.*)
 252, 256, 295, 304, 308, 318, 319, 321,
 325, 325n87, 331, 343, 344, 347, 350, 355,
 360, 364
 Archbishop of 8, 66, 142, 142n40
Capilla Real of 142
 Emir of 234
 Treaty of 322
 War of 42n28, 76n20, 191, 210, 215, 225,
 243, 357
 Grand Canary (Gran Canaria) 206
 Gratian 49n50
 Great Schism 238
 Greece 142n43, 168n46
 Greek 85, 88, 88n79, 142, 173n65
 Greenblatt, Stephen 69n99
 Gregory the Great, Saint 145, 146, 147fig5.24,
 155, 234
 Gricio, Gaspar de 144n47
 Grieve, Patricia 221, 221n35
 Grossman, Avraham 223n43, 224n45,
 226n53, 226n54
 Groundhog Day 351
 Guadalajara 96n15, 188
 Guadalquivir River 203, 204, 209
 Guadalupe 142, 142n41
 Gualbes, Juan Cristóbal de 40n22
 Guardiola-Griffiths, Cristina 10, 10n40, 11,
 11n47, 28, 73n6, 214, 214n8, 257n6
 Guas, Juan 114, 114n6, 115fig5.1, 116fig5.2,
 117fig5.3, 118fig5.4, 119fig5.5,
 147n58, 151n74
 Guerlas, Mathias 145
 Guernica 203
 Guevara, Antonio de 89
 Guevara, Nicolás 268n45
 Guiana, Prince of 287
 Guinea 202, 202n13
 Gulf of 202
 Guinevere, Queen 357
 Guisando 283
 Toros de 283
 Gunther, Richard 330n100
 Guyver, Robert 303n12
 Guzmán, Esteban de (Lord of Orgaz) 187
 Guzmán, Juana de 281, 283
hacha 234
 Haman 16, 18, 222, 226, 227, 229, 230
 Hamilton, Michelle 16, 16n63, 16n64, 18,
 18n71, 23, 23n91, 31
 Hand, John Oliver 137n34
 Habsburg (Hapsburg) 86, 89, 138n37, 154,
 239, 251, 276, 286
 Haro, Aldonza de 189
 Haro Cortés, Marta 271n56
 Hastings, Adrian 302, 302n8
 heaven 9, 10, 11, 99, 103, 126, 183, 233, 256,
 284, 295
 Hebreo, León (Judah Abravanel) 175
 Hebrew 88, 214, 216, 218n21, 232, 250, 284,
 292, 353
 Helbig, Jean 123n14
 Helen, Saint 106, 108
 Henrique, Prince of Portugal (see also Henry
 the Navigator) 199
 Henríquez de Jorquera, Francisco 210n29
 Henry IV, King 51, 51n55, 51n56, 51n57, 62
 Henry VII 137, 150
 Henry VIII, King of England 87, 150n70, 238,
 257, 278
 Henry the Navigator (see also Henrique,
 Prince of Portugal) 199, 207n24
 heraldic emblem 190
 Hercules 144, 221, 221n32, 221n33, 221n34
 heresy 11, 17, 34, 39, 44, 45, 48, 49, 53, 58n74,
 59n75, 181, 248, 249, 251, 252
 heretic 17, 34, 35, 42, 45, 46, 46n38, 46n39,
 47, 49, 50n52, 50n53, 351, 351n31
 -al 36n9, 39, 39n21, 47, 58n74, 247, 249
 Hermandad (see also Santa Hermandad) 37,
 37n14, 37n16, 38, 38n17, 47
 Hermida Ruiz, Aurora 177n91
heros 173n65
 Herráez Vossbrink, Akemi Luisa 154n89
 Herrera de Pisuerga 107
 Herrero Carretero, Concha 144n47, 146n56
 Hess, Andrew C. 322n76
 heterodoxy 362
hidalgo 37n16, 177, 316n55
 Hierro 206
 High Court (see also *Audiencia*,
Chancillería) 242
 Highfield, Roger 74n15, 76n24, 194n164
 Hilgarth, J.N. 350n26
 Hispan (see also Espan, Ispan) 221

- Hispanic 2, 11n42, 24n99, 78n32, 85n61,
88n80, 101n28, 104n36, 135n25, 154n89,
162n18, 165n32, 168n43, 168n45, 175n74,
175n75, 177n83, 183n117, 186n136,
187n137, 205n18, 223n42, 255n4, 268n44,
271n56, 301, 301n7, 323n78, 341n4,
350n27, 364n65, 365n66
- Hispania 63n85, 67n93, 79, 81n47, 220,
253n39, 272, 301, 302n7, 324
- Hispanidad 333n11, 365, 365n66
- Hispano-Flemish 91, 95n12, 96, 98, 117n11,
120n12, 123n13, 123n14, 124n15, 124n16,
126n18, 126n19, 132n23, 135, 135n25, 137,
138n35, 147, 147n58, 153n81, 156
- Hispanophobia 333n11
- Hitler, Adolf 299n2
- Hobsbawm, Eric J. 302n11
- Hodge, Polly 356n47
- Hohe Minne* 172
- Holocaust 357
- Holy Office (of the Inquisition) 48, 55,
250, 253
- Holy Roman Empire 42, 154
- Holy Saturday 234
- Holy See 23, 36, 38, 46, 47, 49, 57, 238
- Holy Spirit 106, 233
- Holy Thursday (see also Maundy
Thursday) 235
- Holy Week 49, 233, 234
- Hollywood 355, 357, 358, 359fig13.3, 360
- Homer 88
- hope 108n46, 169, 170, 229, 230, 256, 257,
266, 273, 274, 287, 309
- Horace 3
- La Horcajada, Lord of 176
- Hornachos 322, 322n76
- Horowitz, Mardi J. 264n26
- Hourihane, Colum 95n11
- Howe, Elizabeth Teresa 7, 7n26, 27, 28,
87n78, 88n80, 93n3, 159n7, 236n12
- hubris* 289
- Huelva 203
- Huizinga, Johan 174
- humanist 3, 72, 73, 75, 79, 81n44, 86, 87,
87n76, 88, 90, 150, 158, 159, 216n17, 254,
272, 323
- Hurtado de Mendoza,
Diego 96n15, 110
- Ibáñez Martín, José 361
- Ibáñez Pérez, Alberto C. 124n17
- Iberia 15, 148, 156, 157, 175n75, 207n25, 211,
222n38, 224, 230, 256, 257n6, 263n23
-n 31, 72, 91, 114n6, 116, 135, 142, 152,
152n80, 156, 202n13, 213, 216, 220, 221,
227, 229, 229n62, 230, 231n68, 256, 261,
270, 350n26
-n Peninsula 96, 101, 114n3, 135n25,
143n44, 149n66, 149n68, 153n82, 180,
196, 215n9, 221, 246, 258, 262, 294
- Ibero-American exhibition 252, 252n35
- Ibn Hazm 176
- Ibn Verga, Solomon 229, 230
- Iglesia Duarte, José Ignacio de la 156n94
- Iglesias, María Carmen 256n4
- Iglesias Rodríguez, Juan José 205n18
- Ihrie, Maureen 85n61
- Immaculate Conception (see also
Conceptionist) 10, 101, 101n28, 103
- India 19
- Indies, the (*las Indias*) 205n18, 206n22
- indigenous 3, 14, 19, 211, 212, 362, 365n66
- infanta* 73, 75, 78n33, 80n40, 83n56, 84n60,
87n74, 162
- Infante, Blas de 363, 364n63
- infante* 73, 79, 79n36, 80, 127fig5.12, 161n15
- ingenio* 186
- Ingersoll, Catharine 138n37
- Inglés, Antonio 137
- Innocent IV, Pope 36n9
- Innocent VIII, Pope 47, 47n40, 47n41,
47n42, 47n43, 48, 49, 49n47, 49n50,
50n53, 52, 54n60, 54n61, 59, 63n85,
65n89, 234, 245, 249
- Inquisition 12, 13, 14, 14n59, 17, 18, 19, 26, 31,
34–71, 156n94, 183, 220n31, 232–53, 256,
304, 315n54, 322, 327, 332, 345, 347, 349,
351, 351n31, 353, 354, 355, 360, 361, 362,
362n59, 362n60
- inquisitor 35, 36, 36n9, 38, 40, 41n25, 46, 47,
50n53, 51, 56, 247, 248, 249, 250
-ial 17, 35, 36, 36n9, 42n28, 43n31, 50n51,
52n59, 56, 248, 249, 322, 349
General 45, 49, 246
- interrogatorio* 250
- invención* 163, 166, 167, 171n59, 178n92, 180,
181, 186, 186n132, 186n133, 186n135,

- invención* (cont.)
 186n136, 187, 187n137, 188, 188n145, 189,
 189n148, 190, 190n150, 190n153, 191, 192n
 192n157, 194, 195n169
- iqtibās* 218n21
- Irving, Washington 314
- Isabel of/de Barcelos (see also Barcelos, Isabel
 de) 199, 200, 200n7
- Isabel de Borbón 187
- Isabel de Portugal (see also Avis, Isabel
 de) 96, 165, 200, 200n7, 200n8
- Isabel* magazine 363
- Isabel, Princess 51n55, 165, 185, 199n6, 265,
 268n45, 271n56, 273n66, 275, 276
- Isabel, Saint 199n6, 360, 361n53
- Isabel* television series (RTVE) 13n53, 339,
 339n1, 343, 344, 344n8, 344n9, 344n11,
 346n15, 347, 347n16, 347n17
- Isaiah, book of 226, 226n57, 227, 227n57
- Ishikawa, Chiyo 138n37, 143n45
- ishq* 173n65
- Isidore of Seville 304
- Isidro de Argüello, Gaspar 42n29
- Islam 147n58, 166n34, 207, 215n9, 215n10,
 232, 246, 322
- ification 12, 364, 364n64, 366
- Ispan (see also Espan, Hispan) 220, 221
- Israel 217, 218, 220, 223, 225, 227, 228,
 229, 282
- ite 16, 218
- King of 217, 218, 226, 232
- Italian 13n54, 71n106, 137n30, 138n36,
 142, 142n42, 153, 154, 154n88, 159, 172,
 194n167, 209, 211, 212n32, 216n17, 226,
 231, 239, 242, 262n17, 269, 315n54
- Peninsula 196
- Italy 72, 79, 84, 153n81, 216n17, 245,
 285, 309n35
- Izabel 217, 222n38
- Izmir 231
- Jacob, Rabbi 224
- Jacobs, Martin 216n17, 217, 217n18
- Jacoby, David 152n80
- Jaen 325, 35n5
- Jakstrat, Sven 125n17, 137n29
- James I, King of Aragon 36n9
- Jankovich, Mark 358n49
- Japanese 323n79
- Jayyusi, Salma Khadra 173n64
- Jenner, Michelle 343, 347, 357
- Jennings, Nicola 120n12
- Jeremiah, book of 220, 224, 227
- Jerez de la Frontera 204, 205
- jerga* 267
- Jerusalem 106, 226n57, 234
- Jesus Christ 9, 31, 61, 96, 105, 233, 234, 236,
 237, 250
- Jew 12, 13, 14, 16, 18, 19, 42, 44, 44n34, 48n46,
 49, 49n51, 59, 196, 232, 246, 247, 248,
 250, 252, 253, 256, 281, 282, 284, 304,
 309, 309n35, 322, 323, 345, 346, 348,
 350, 351, 351n29, 351n31, 353, 354,
 354n43, 356, 357, 360, 361
- ish 9, 13, 16, 16n63, 17, 18, 31, 49n51, 50,
 50n51, 52, 57, 60, 161, 167n38, 213–31,
 248, 249, 250, 294, 295, 345, 349, 350,
 351n29, 351n30, 357
- jewel 15, 126, 144n51, 148, 149, 149n69,
 156, 290
- ry 29, 185, 309
- Jezabel/Jezebel, Queen of Sidon 16, 217, 218,
 218n23, 218n24, 230, 232
- Jiménez Calvente, Teresa 270n51
- Jiménez de Rada, Rodrigo 301, 301n7
- Joachim, Saint 105, 106
- Joan II, King of Navarre and
 Aragón 219, 220
- João I, King of Portugal 199
- João II, King of Portugal 208, 209, 264,
 264n25, 264n26, 264n27, 264n28, 265,
 265n29, 265n30, 265n31
- João III, King of Portugal 262n20
- João, Prince of Portugal 199
- Job 269, 276
- book of 220
- John, Saint 106, 108, 114, 132, 144, 253,
 287, 306
- John II, King of Aragon 35n7
- John (Juan) II, King of Castile 63n85, 66
- John of Austria 321
- John of Gaunt 198, 207n24
- John Paul II, Pope 20n80, 253, 360, 361, 362
- John the Baptist, Saint 106, 108, 114, 124,
 124n17, 129fig5.14, 130fig5.15, 132, 138
- John the Evangelist, Saint 114, 132
- Jones, R.O. 183n17
- Jonge, Krista de 114n6

- jousting 30, 161, 163, 165, 174, 176, 178, 180, 181, 184, 185, 186, 191, 192, 194
- Juan I, King of Castile 117, 261, 261n16
- Juan II, King of Aragón 183, 198
- Juan (John) II, King of Castile 73, 73n10, 78, 81n46, 87n76, 95n10, 96, 110, 117, 120, 125fig5.10, 126, 126fig5.11, 129, 131, 132, 132n24, 144n47, 160, 163, 164n23, 192, 198, 200, 217n19, 238, 239, 254, 257, 263
- Juan, Prince of Asturias 22n87, 195, 257, 258, 274, 276
- Juana de Aragón 89, 111n52
- Juana of Castile (see also *Beltraneja, La*) 80n40, 197, 262n20, 343
- Juana of Portugal 191, 200
- Judah 220
- Judaic 44, 218n23, 223n43
- Judaism 156n94, 217n19, 218, 218n20, 218n25, 219n26, 219n27, 220n30, 221n32, 222n36, 222n37, 222n38, 223n40, 223n41, 224n46, 225, 225n48, 225n50, 225n51, 225n52, 226n54, 226n55, 226n56, 227n57, 227n58, 227n59, 228n60, 228n61, 232, 246, 248, 249, 250, 351n29, 351n30
- Judaizing 39, 52, 249, 351n31
- judaizante* (see also *crypto-Jew*) 12, 351, 353
- Judeo-Andalusi 218n21
- Judezmo 271
- Jugie, Sophie 148n63
- Juliá Martínez, Eduardo 85n64
- Julián, Count 282
- Junquera de Vega, Paulina 145n47
- JxCAT (Junts per Catalunya) 333
- Kallendorf, Hilaire 3n5, 24n97, 81n46, 135n25
- Kamen, Henry 6, 6n19, 59n75, 250, 312n38, 318n63, 321n72, 324n83, 325, 325n88, 362n60
- Kaplan, Gregory B. 11n42, 85n61, 104, 104n36, 183n17
- Kasl, Ronda 117n11, 120n12, 123n13, 123n14, 124n15, 124n16, 126n18, 126n19, 132n23
- Katzenstein, H. Jacob 218, 218n23, 218n24
- Kaup, Monika 111
- Kavaler, Ethan Matt 114n5, 114n6
- Keith, Robert G. 202n13
- Kelley, James E., Jr. 210n29
- Kemperdick, Stephan 132n24
- Keniston, L.I. 72n4
- Kennedy, Kirstin 187n137, 188n143
- Kenny, Anthony 279n1
- Kerkhof, Maximilian P.A.M. 99n25
- Kessler, Herbert 156n94
- Kings, book of 218, 228n54
- Kitson, Melissa 354n43
- Klein, Herbert S. 212n32
- Klein, Julius 152n80
- Knighton, Tess 114n3, 149n66, 149n68, 160n11
- Koppel, Greta 137n34
- Krásá, Josef 181n104
- Kroesen, Justin E.A. 143n44
- Kruger-Hickman, Kathryn 168n45
- l-Ḥasān, Abū 215
- La Palma 206
- La Rábida 203
- Labanyi, Jo 343n7
- Lacarra, M.E. 78n30
- Ladero Quesada, Miguel Ángel 20, 21n82, 36n10, 59n77, 74n15, 80n43, 81n48, 90n94, 158n2, 197n3, 201n11, 204n16, 205n18, 205n19, 205n20, 206n21, 263n21, 317, 317n61, 318n62, 318n64, 322, 322n74, 327n93
- LaFuente, Modesto 314
- Lahoz, Lucía 114n6
- Lalinde Abadía, Jesús 35n6
- Lama, Víctor de 185n127
- Lancaster, Catalina de (Catherine or Katherine of) 198
- Lansing, Carole 261n17, 262n17
- Lanzarote, Pedro 339
- Laplana Gil, José Enrique 316n56
- Laqueur, Thomas Walter 261n17
- Laredo 162
- Laso de Castilla, Pedro 189
- Laso de Mendoza, Catalina 189
- Latin 22n87, 28, 48n46, 69n100, 71, 74, 80, 80n43, 81, 82, 82n51, 82n53, 83, 84, 84n58, 84n59, 85, 86, 87, 88, 90, 93, 93n3, 95n13, 153, 159, 159n7, 161, 171n60, 173n65, 194n167, 207n25, 236, 236n12, 269, 269n48, 271n58, 272n61, 273, 274n66, 314, 323
- America 202n13, 212n32
- Law, Bernard, Cardinal 362

- Lawrance, Jeremy 153n82
 Lawrence, J.N.H. 78, 78n32
Lazarillo de Tormes 316n55
 Lea, Henry Charles 42n30
 Leal de Faria, Ana 275n72
 Lehfeldt, Elizabeth A. 6n18, 75n18,
 77n27, 256n6
 Lemos, Margarita de 191
 Lenten office (*oficio de Cuaresma*) 235
 Leon/León 35, 37n13, 42n30, 53n60, 54n63,
 62, 62n84, 131n22, 132n22, 144, 144n50,
 151n73, 153n83, 261n16, 318, 324, 325,
 325n87, 332, 332n106, 362n58
 León, Luis de 9, 73n6
letra 43n31, 48n46, 82n53, 87, 99n22,
 142n39, 145n51, 159n7, 159n8, 165, 167,
 168, 171n59, 176, 178n92, 186, 186n132,
 186n135, 187, 187n137, 188, 189, 190
 -do 64n87, 67n93, 239, 240
 Levi, Abraham, Rabbi 348, 352, 352n34
 Leviticus, book of 228
 Levin, Carole 87n75
Leyenda Negra (Black Legend) 252n36,
 315, 315n54
 Li, Andrés de 268n45
lingua franca 323, 323n81
 Lisbon 165, 202, 209, 229n63, 229n64,
 230n66, 256n5
lisonja 190, 190n150
 Liss, Peggy K. 24, 24n99, 79n36, 79n36,
 111n51, 153n84, 196n3, 199n6, 200n7,
 201n11, 202n12, 203n14, 256n6, 258n8,
 300n3, 304n15, 304n16, 308n31, 317, 338,
 338n125, 341, 341n4
 Llamazares, Iván 330n100
 Llorca, Bernardino 34n1, 57n72
 Llorente, Juan Antonio 47, 48, 48n45
 Lobo Cabrera, Manuel 13n55, 206n21,
 206n23, 208n26
 Lope de Vega, Félix 8, 8n30, 20n80, 32, 83,
 84n58, 84n59, 237n14, 279–98, 300n3,
 312, 312n41, 312n42, 312n43, 313, 313n45,
 313n46, 313n48
 Lopez, Fernão 219
 López de Carvajal-García de Bovadilla,
 Bernardino 22n87, 269n48, 272n61
 López de Coca Castañer, José
 Enrique 270n50
 López de Córdoba, Leonor 75n17, 75n20,
 76n20
 López de Haro, Diego 189
 López de Mendoza, Íñigo, Marqués de
 Santillana 22, 54n63, 89, 99n25, 110,
 183, 184, 185n127, 271, 271n59, 277, 278
 López de Toro, José 6n21, 8n28, 110n49,
 155n91, 254n1
 López de Vivero, Juan 242
 López Díez, María 114n6
 López Facal, Ramón 303n12, 308, 309n33,
 309n34, 331n101, 336n121
 López-Morillas, Frances M. 74n15
 López Poza, Sagrario 194n165, 194n168
 López Santidrián, Saturnino 247n32, 247n33
 Lord's Supper 234
 Loren, Sophia 357
 Louis XI, King of France 287
 Louis XII, King of France 326
 Low Countries 86, 123, 124, 135, 143, 146, 148,
 150, 156
 Lowes, John Livingston 173n65
 Lucena, Juan de 159, 159n8
 Lucena, Luis de 182, 183, 183n111
 Lucy, Saint 234
 Luna, Álvaro de 72, 96, 100, 110, 164n23
 Luna, María de 97, 100, 100n26, 110, 259n12
 Lusitania (see also Portugal) 198
 Luzzatto, Simone 216n17
 Lymberopoulou, Angeliki 142n43
 Machado, Roger 149n68
 Macía Serrano, Antonio 114n4
 Macías Hernández, Antonio Manuel 206n21
 MacKay, Angus 153n82
 Macpherson, Ian 75n13, 162n16, 171n59,
 175n75, 177n83, 186, 186n135, 187n140,
 188n145, 189, 189n148, 190, 190n149
 Madeira 202, 206, 206n21, 207
 Madonna, the 101
 Madrid 116n8, 118fig5.4, 124, 124n17,
 129fig5.14, 132n24, 147fig5.24, 221n35,
 334, 334n112, 349, 364n65, 365n66
 Community of 364
 Magi, the 124, 124n17, 132
 Mahn-Lot, Marianne 80n39, 81n45,
 81n46, 86n72
 "Make Spain Great Again," 12, 364

- Málaga 77, 142, 142n41, 155, 155n90, 182, 195, 205, 270
- Mallorca 35n5, 325, 325n87
- Malpica Cuello, Antonio 206n21
- manera de orar* 97
- manliness 7, 88
- manly woman (see also *mujer varonil*) 7, 16, 76, 88, 90
- Mann, Anthony 356
- Manrique, Beatriz de 99, 101
- Manrique, Gómez, Mayor of Toledo 43n31
- Manrique, Jorge 177
- Manrique de Lara, Íñigo 58n74
- Manuel I, King of Portugal (see also *Caesarissimus*) 86, 164n26, 166n34, 257, 259, 259n11, 260, 265, 266
- Manuel, João 268n45
- Manuel, Juan 168n44, 189
- Manzano Manzano, Juan 209n27
- Maqueda 188
- Mar Pequeña 203
- Marañón, Gregorio 32n71
- Maravall, José Antonio 160n9, 313
- maravedí* 51n57, 143n45, 205, 235
- Marcos, Estella 95, 95n12, 108, 108n47, 109
- Margaret of Antioch, Saint 190, 190n153
- Margaret of Austria, Princess 143n47, 154, 155, 257, 258, 272
- Margarit, Joan/Juan, Cardinal 54n64, 301, 302n7
- Margarita, Saint 108
- María, Queen of Portugal 155n92
- María Manuela of Portugal, Queen of Spain 262n20, 275, 275n72
- Marian devotion 10, 96, 103
- Mariana, Juan de 63n85
- Marías, Fernando 113n2, 115n7
- Marías Martínez, Clara 271n56
- Marín Gelabert, Miquel A. 40n24
- Marín Ocete, Antonio 210n29
- Marina, Saint 108
- Marineo Sículo, Lucio 79, 79n36, 81, 82, 82n52, 82n53, 85, 86, 159, 263n21
- Marino, Nancy 164, 341, 341n5
- Marks, Gary 330n100
- Márquez de la Plata y Ferrándiz, Vicenta
 María 81n47, 82n52, 82n53, 85n64, 85n65, 89n87, 89n88
- marrano* 60, 60n80, 351
- Marrast, Robert 282n6
- Mars 193
- Martens, Didier 124n17, 135n25, 135n26
- Martha, Saint 108
- Martin v, Pope 65n89, 238
- Martin of Tours, Saint 234
- Martin, José Luis 343
- Martin, June Hall 173n67
- Martín, María 354n43
- Martin, Therese 94, 94n7, 99n24
- Martín Barba, José Julio 113n1
- Martín Casares, Aurelia 207n25
- Martín Gaité, Carmen 6, 6n23, 341, 341n5
- Martínez, Luis 355n45
- Martínez, Zacarías, Archbishop of Santiago de Compostela 251
- Martínez de Toledo, Alfonso 72
- Martínez Díez, Gonzalo 36n9, 50n54
- Martínez González, Rafael 137n29
- Martínez Millán, José 144n48, 258n8
- Martino, Ernesto de 262
- Mártir (de Anglería), Pedro (see also Martyr [of Anghiera], Peter) 6n21, 7, 8, 8n28, 8n32, 11n43, 75, 79, 79n36, 89, 110n49, 155n91, 159, 254, 254n1, 255n3, 265n32, 266, 266n37, 267, 267n43, 275
- martyr 91, 99, 100, 108, 109, 110, 190, 191
- Martyr (of Anghiera), Peter (see also Mártir [de Anglería], Pedro) 6, 11, 109, 155n91
- Marxist 302
- Mary Magdalene 108, 142n39
- Mary of Egypt, Saint 108
- másvaler* 177
- Mas, Artur 334
- masculine 7, 8, 9, 15, 16, 75, 345
- Mass 101, 145, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 260, 266, 266n36, 267, 269, 334
- of Our Lady (*Misa de Nuestra Señora*) 236
- of St. Gregory 146, 147fig5.24, 155
- Mata Carriazo, Juan de 9n35, 37n16, 158n4, 185n128, 277n78
- Matins 234, 236
- Matthieu, Pierre 49n50
- Maundy Thursday (see also Holy Thursday) 234, 235
- Maura, Gabriel 258n9

- Maximilian I, Prince 153
 Maximilian, Holy Roman Emperor 259
 May, F.L. 152n80
 Maza Zorrilla, Elena 200n7
 McCready, Warren T. 279n2
 McKendrick, Melveena 297
 Medina del Campo 37n15, 113n1, 145, 146
 Medina Sidonia, Duke of 160, 203, 204, 204n16, 205, 210
 Medinaceli
 Count of 203
 Duchess of 189
 Duke of 203, 210, 211
 Mediterranean 154, 197, 205, 210, 216n17, 230, 231n68, 261n16, 268, 333
 Medrano, Luisa (Lucía) 85, 86n67, 88n79
 Melammed, Meir 222, 223, 224
 melancholia 173
 Melero, M. Luisa 146n57
 Memling, Hans 142
memorial 36n12, 42, 42n30, 328n94
 "Memory Boom," 342, 343
 Mena, Juan de 164, 164n23, 167, 167n37, 177, 177n88
 Mendibil, P. 270n52, 270n53
 Mendoza, Ana de, Princess of Eboli 321
 Mendoza, Cristóbal 314, 314n50, 314n51
 Mendoza, Francisca de 88n79
 Mendoza, Leonor de 210
 Mendoza, Mencia de 84n60, 89, 91, 93, 93n5, 94, 94n6, 95, 96n15, 99, 100, 100n26, 101, 106, 107n42, 108n46, 110, 110n50, 111n51, 112
 Mendoza y Bovadilla, Francisco,
 Cardinal 59n77, 160, 191, 273
 Mendoza y de la Cerda, María de 88, 88n82, 89, 89n90
 Ménendez González, Nicolás 120n12
 Menéndez (y) Pelayo, Marcelino 246, 246n30, 247, 295, 295n10, 313
 Menéndez Pidal, Ramón 74n15, 76n24, 194n164, 220n31, 272n56, 308, 313
 Meneses, Guiomar 177
merced 46n39, 56n65, 78n31, 83n57, 111
 Merino de Cáceres, José Miguel 114n5, 116n8
 Merino wool 197
 Messiah 250
 Messina 226n54
 metafiction 357
 Mexico 308
 Miami 339, 339n1, 340fig13.1
 Michael, Ian 74n13
 Miguel Briongos, Jerónimo 183
 Miguel de la Paz, Prince of Portugal 257
 Milan 10, 103, 154
 Milán, Luis de 166, 166n35, 168, 169n48, 170
 Milenioweb.es 364n64
 Miles Jesu 342, 361, 362, 363
 Miller, Beth 85n61
 Mina 211
 Minder, Ralph 330n99, 331n102, 335, 335n120
 Minister of Education 361
 Minister of Propaganda 356
The Ministry of Time (El Ministerio del Tiempo) 357, 365, 366, 343n7, 347–55, 357, 365, 366
 Miquel Juan, Matilde 97n18, 100
 Miraflores
 Charterhouse 29, 94, 95n10, 95n12, 96, 97, 100, 114–35, 120fig5.6, 121fig5.7, 122fig5.8, 123fig5.9, 125fig5.10, 126fig5.11, 127fig5.12, 128fig5.13, 131fig5.16, 133fig5.17, 133fig5.18, 137, 138, 146, 151, 151n76, 156
 Miranda, Andrés de, Doctor 86
 Miranda, Arias de 131n22
 Miranda, Count of 205
 misogynist 72, 352
 Miss Universe Contest 339, 340fig13.1, 365
 Moguer 203
 Molina 35n5, 325, 326
 Mongol 215
 Montague (see Montagut) 190
 Montague, William de 190n151
 Montagut (see Montague) 190
 Monteagudo, Countess of 89
 Monteagudo, Enric de 190
 Monter, William 59n75
 Montero, Paulino 107n43
 Montesinos, Ambrosio de 268n45
 Montesinos, Antonio de 271n56
 Monti, Pietro 7, 10, 103
 Montoro, Antón de 10, 104, 110, 183, 184
 Montoya, Íñigo 315n54
 Montpellier 173

- Moor (see also *moro*, Muslim) 42, 45,
61, 62, 63
- Moral, Celia del 215n9
- Morales Padrón, Francisco 206n23
- Morán Samaniego, J. 87n76
- More, Thomas 87
- Morell Peguero, Blanca 209n28
- Moreno Koch, Yolanda 217n19, 218n20,
218n25, 219n26, 219n27, 220n30, 221n32,
222n36, 222n37, 222n38, 223n40,
223n41, 223n42, 224n46, 225n49,
225n50, 225n51, 225n52, 226n54,
226n55, 226n56, 227n57, 227n58,
227n59, 228n60, 228n61
- Morilla Romero, Juan 196n2
- Morillo, Miguel de 34
- morisco* 215, 322, 322n76
- moro* (see also Moor, Muslim) 42n30, 45n37,
54n64, 61n82, 62n84, 63n86
- Morocco 215, 216
- Morreale, Laura 365n66
- Morros, Felipe 137n31, 137n34,
138n35, 138n37
- Morte García, Carmen 154n88
- mote* 166, 166n35, 167n36, 167n39, 169n48,
170, 176, 177, 185n129
- Mother of God 11, 105, 106, 109, 363, 363n61
- Moya, Carlos 256n4
- Moya, Marquesa de/Marchioness of 76, 77,
77n26, 182
- Moya, Pérez de 88
- Mozarabic 114
- mozo* 289, 290
de espuelas 288
- mujer varonil* (see also manly
woman) 7, 76, 88
- Muñoz Fernández, A. 78n31, 80n36, 81n46,
83n57, 85n60, 88, 88n81, 90n95
- Münzer, Jerónimo 79n38, 80n38
- Murcia 35n5, 318, 325, 325n87
- Muros, Diego de 22n87, 269n48, 272n61
- Murray, James 361n54
- Muslim (see also Moor, *moro*) 8, 14, 16n63,
18, 48n46, 65n89, 77, 89, 152n80, 173n64,
182, 195, 196, 205, 209, 213–31, 232, 242,
246, 247, 252, 256, 270, 281, 282, 284,
285, 286, 291, 292, 294, 301n6, 304, 313,
319, 322, 323, 353, 360
- Mussolini, Benito 299n2
- Muza, King 282
- mysticism 246
- Nader, Helen 13n54, 88n82, 89n86, 210n29,
212n32
- Nájera, Duque de 282, 287, 291
- Naples 180, 226n54, 254
- Napoleonic 348
- Narbonne 36n9, 165
- Nasrid 214, 215n10, 216, 217, 228, 230, 256
- Nassau
Countess of 89n90
Duke of 84n60
- National Catholicism 304, 330
- National Costume Competition 339,
340fig13.1
- Nativity
of Christ 233
of Mary 101n28, 233
- natural* (native) 51n57, 54n63, 61n82, 62n83,
62n84, 63n86, 64n89, 65n90
- Navagiero, Andrea 8, 182
- Navarre/Navarra 165, 180, 216, 219, 221, 318,
326, 326n91
- Navarrese 165
- Nazi 356, 356n47
- Neapolitan 163
- Nebrija, Antonio de 79n36, 80, 81n44, 82,
86, 87, 194, 195, 323, 323n77, 323n79,
324, 348
- Nebuchednezzar II 224
- Neolithic 206
- Neo-medievalism 342, 344
- Neopatria 35n5, 325, 325n87
- Netanyahu, Benzion 250
- Netflix 347, 347n19
- Netherlandish 132, 132n24, 135n25, 138, 142,
143, 145, 146, 148, 149, 153, 153n81, 154,
154n89, 156, 239
- Netherlands 123, 142n43, 152n80, 233
- Neuschäfer, Hans-Jörg 303, 303n14, 304n18
- New World 1n1, 13, 14, 19, 256
- New Year 235
- New Yorker 350
- Newitt, M.D.D. 207n24
- Newman, F.X. 171n55, 171n56, 173
- Nichols Jr., Stephen G. 180n103

- Nickson, Tom 120n12
 Nicostrata (see also Carmenta) 84, 84n59
 Niebla
 Count of 203
 County of 203
 Nieto Soria, José Manuel 267n40, 268n44
 Nieuwdorp, Hans 124n17
La niña de tus ojos (*The Girl of Your Dreams*) 356
 Nirenberg, David 156n94, 351n29
 Nogales Rincón, David 261n17
 Northern European 113, 114, 135, 135n25, 137, 138, 143, 145, 147, 148, 149, 153, 154, 155, 156
 Núñez de Arnalte, Fernán 188

objet d'art 28
 Ocaña, Javier 355n45
 O'Connor, Mary Catherine 269n48
 Oettel, Thérèse 86n67
 offertory 235, 237
 Old Christian 43n31, 44
 Old Testament 16, 126, 132
 Oliva, Count of 169, 169n48
 Olivares, Conde-Duque de/Count-Duke of 316, 327, 328, 328n94, 343
 Olivares, Javier 343
 Olivia and Hill 323
 Olmedo 37n15, 282
 Olmedo Bernal, Santiago 203n15
 Oosterwijk, Anne van 149n64
 Opie, Iona 168n46
 Opie, Peter 168n46
Opus Dei 20, 361, 361n53
 Organization of American States 2, 300n3, 364
 Orgaz 187, 261n16
 Oristan 35n5, 325, 325n87
oro (coin) 164
 Orsini, Catarina 164
 Ortiz, Alonso/Alfonso 22, 22n87, 258, 268n45, 271n48, 272, 272n61, 273n66, 273n67, 274n68, 277, 278
 Ortiz de Zúñiga, Diego 43, 43n32
 Ortiz Pradas, Daniel 114n5
 Orts, Juan 40n22
 Osorio de Quiñones, Isabel 185
 Ostlund, DeLys 295, 296, 296n11

 Osuna, Francisco de 247, 247n32
 Ottoman 216n17, 217, 231, 322n76
 Empire 216, 217
 Otte, Enrique 209n28
 Oviedo 105n39, 239, 241

 PNV (Euzko Alderdi Jeltzalea / Partido Nacionalista Vasco) 335, 335n115
 PSC (party) 333, 333n111
 PP (Popular Party/Partido Popular) 333, 335, 348
 PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) 348
 Pacheco, Francisca 89
 Pacheco, Juan (Marqués de Villena) 75, 111n51
 Pacheco, María 85n63, 89, 89n86, 90, 111n51
 Padilla, Juan de 89
 Padua 216n17, 226n54
 Palencia 37n15
 Palencia, Alonso/Alfonso de 37n14, 39, 39n21, 42n28, 75, 192, 192n157, 193, 193n160, 200n7, 223, 309
 Palencia, Vázquez de 184
 Palm Sunday 234
 Paloma 218, 219, 220
 Palos (de la Frontera) 203, 204, 205, 205n18
 Pamplona 318, 79n37
 papal absolution 352
 papal bull 35n7, 180, 346, 351
paramento 186
 Paredes, Sancho de 144n47
 Paris 36n9
 Paris, Gaston 171
 Parkinson Zamora, Lois 111
 Parry, John H. 202n13
 Parsons, John Carmi 261n103
 Partido Popular (PP) 348
 Pascual Cervera y Topete (street) 333n111
 Passion (of Christ) 123, 143, 143n45, 145, 233
 Pastor, C. 355n44
 Patinkin, Mandy 357
patronazgo 94
 Paul II, Pope 20n80, 235, 253, 360, 361n53, 362
 Paul VI, Pope 20n80
 Paz, Manuel de la 108n46
 Paz y Meliá, Antonio 37n14, 192n156, 200n7
 Pedro I, King of Castile (Pedro el Cruel) 198

- Pedrosa, José Manuel 168n43, 168n46
 Pentecost 233, 235
 Pepe Rubianes (street) 333nn11
perdiz 178
 Perea Rodríguez, Óscar 93, 93n5, 107, 107n41, 107n42, 187n137, 195n174
 Pereda, Felipe 93, 94, 94n6, 99, 99n24, 101n31, 107n42, 110, 110n50, 156n94, 261n16, 268n46
 Perestrelo, Bartolomeu 207
 Perestrelo e Moniz, Felipa 208
 Pérez, Antonio 321, 321n71
 Pérez, Janet 85n61
 Pérez, Joseph 36n11, 316, 316n56
 Pérez de Almazán, Miguel 278n79
 Pérez de Arriaga, Joaquín 183nn11
 Pérez de Guzmán, Fernán 78n32, 195n170
 Pérez de Moya, Juan 88
 Pérez de Tudela y Bueso, Juan 161n13, 188n141, 194n166, 195n171, 266n36
 Pérez-Embid, Florentino 201nn1, 202n13
 Pérez Higuera, Teresa 114n5
 Pérez-Magallón, Jesús 300n3, 312n42
 Pérez Monzón, Olga 97n18, 100, 100n26, 100n27
 Pérez Núñez Coronel, Fernando 224
 Pérez Preciado, José Juan 132n24
 Pérez Priego, Miguel 258n9
 Pérez Prieto, Miguel Ángel 167n37
 Pérez-Reverte, Arturo 301n6
 Perpetua, Saint 108, 109n48
persona 9, 21, 69, 69n100, 70, 71, 155, 256, 262, 275
 Perugino, Pietro 142
peseta 304, 305fig2.1, 305fig2.2
pharmakon 3, 24
 Philip (Philippe) I, King (the Fair/Handsome, of Hapsburg) (see also Philip of Burgundy, Duke; Phillip, Archduke of Flanders) 15, 86, 154, 162, 185, 239, 264
 Philip of Burgundy, Duke (see also Philip I, King; Phillip, Archduke of Flanders) 259, 260
 Philip the Bold 148n63, 150n70
 Phillip, Archduke of Flanders (see also Philip I, King; Philip of Burgundy) 319, 343
 Phillip II, King of Spain 321
 Phillip IV, King of Spain (see also Felipe IV, King) 327, 328
 Phillips, William D., Jr. 13, 14n56, 20, 20n78, 30, 153n80, 197n5, 200n7, 207n25, 209n27, 211n30
 Phoenician 232
 phoenix 165, 165n32
piccola morte 187
 Pico della Mirandola, Giovanni 68, 69n98
 Pimentel, Juana de 89, 96
 Pina, Rui de 264n25
 Pinar, Florencia de 85, 85n61, 85n62, 178, 179n97
 Pinar, Gerónimo 159n7, 162, 163n19, 163n20, 164, 164n24, 165, 166, 168n44, 178, 191, 195, 195n174
 Piñero Ramírez, Pedro M. 187n137
pintor de la corte 137
 Pisan, Christine de 72, 75n18, 84
piso (tier) 106, 108
 Pita Andrade, José Manuel 113n1, 135n25, 135n27, 137n30, 137n33, 138n36, 138n38, 142n39, 142n40, 142n41, 142n43, 143n45, 143n46
 plague (Black Death) 230, 267, 270
 Plato 3
 Plaza de la Hispanidad 333nn11
 Plaza de Pablo Neruda 333nn11
 Polish 193
 political correctness 353
 polychrome 124, 128fig5.13
 polyptych 124, 124n17
 Pomis, David de 216n17
 Ponce de León, Rodrigo, Marqués of Cádiz 203, 205
 Poppelau, Nicholas von 193, 193n161
portapaz 237
 Porthi, Miguel de 149
 Porto Santo 202, 207
 Portugal 17, 30, 42, 43n31, 73n11, 86, 90, 95n10, 96, 120, 125fig5.10, 126, 126fig5.11, 132, 147n58, 155n92, 164, 164n26, 165, 166, 166n34, 180, 182, 185, 191, 192, 192n157, 193, 197n4, 198, 199, 199n6, 200, 200n7, 200n8, 201, 201n11, 202, 202n13, 203, 204, 207, 207n24, 208, 209, 217n19, 234, 245, 246, 248, 252, 252n35, 256, 257, 257n7, 258, 259, 260, 262, 262n18,

- Portugal (*cont.*)
 262n20, 263, 264, 265, 266, 268n45, 270,
 271n56, 273, 275, 275n72, 284, 286, 291,
 325, 325n88, 328, 328n94, 345
- Portuguese 9, 30, 74, 87, 88, 108n46, 164n26,
 165, 166n34, 175, 178, 184, 187, 196n1, 197,
 198, 199, 199n6, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204,
 206, 207, 207n24, 208, 209, 209n27, 211,
 212, 219, 265, 268, 268n45, 271
- Porus, King 152n79
- Poza, Marquis of 170
- Pradilla, Francisco 344
- pragmática* 243
- Prescott, William 314
- Preti, Giulio 176n81
- prie-dieu* 96, 98, 100, 126
- Prieto, D. 355n44
- Primo de Rivera, José Antonio 299n2
- The Princess Bride* 315n54
- proceso* 52n59, 250
- Prometheus 168n46
- Propaganda, Minister of 356
- Protestant 362
- proto-deconstruction 3
- Provençal 172, 172n63, 180, 181n104, 230
- Psalms, book of 227
- pueblo bajo* 240
- pueblo llano* 242
- Puerto de Santa María 203, 210
- Puerto Real 205, 205n18
- Pulgar, Hernando/Fernando del 4, 23n90,
 37n16, 37n17, 38, 38n17, 38n19, 39n20,
 43, 43n31, 43n55, 63, 63n86, 64, 64n86,
 64n87, 65, 65n89, 65n90, 68n97, 70,
 70n102, 74n15, 76n20, 82n52, 114n4,
 114n5, 153n85, 154n86, 154n87, 157n95,
 158, 158n4, 161, 182n109, 185, 192, 194,
 194n163, 213, 213n1, 263, 263n21, 263n24,
 301, 302n7, 341
- Purification, Mary's 94, 233
- Purim 227, 229
- Puyol, Julio 51n55, 75n19, 192n158
- Pyrenees 318
- Queen of Heaven 9, 99, 103, 256
- The Queen of Spain (La Reina de España)* 355–60, 356fig13.2,
 359fig13.3, 365
- Quintanilla, Alfonso de 37n17
- Quirós, D. Carlos 216n16
- Quirós, Paloma G. 347n16
- Quran 215
- RTVE 13n53, 339, 339n1, 343–55
- Rábade Obradó, María del Pilar 9n36, 72n1,
 72n2, 73n6, 74n12, 75n16, 75n17, 75n18,
 75n20, 76n20, 76n23, 77n26, 80n42,
 82n50, 82n52, 90n95
- rabbi 191, 216, 216n17, 218n20, 222n39, 223,
 224, 250, 348, 349
- racism 364
- Rahel la Ferosa 284
- al-Rahmân v, 'Abd 181n104
- Rahn Phillips, Carla 197n5, 200n7
- Rajoy, Mariano 362, 362n57
- Ramada Curto, Diogo 207n24
- Rambaldo, Ana M. 159n5
- Ramírez, Francisco 83, 84
- Ramírez de Haro y Villaescusa, Diego,
 Bishop of Málaga 22n87, 144,
 155n90, 241, 269n48, 272, 272n61,
 272n623, 272n64
- Ramírez de Lucena, Juan 159, 183
- rape 218, 219
- Ray, Jonathan 231, 231n68
- Real Provisión* 14
- recámara* 98
- recogimiento* 247, 262, 262n20
- Reconquest (La Reconquista) 8, 12, 17, 18,
 67, 90, 209, 295, 364, 365
- Reddy, William 260, 261n14, 277
- referendum 334, 334n113
- Reformation 233, 246
- regidor* 224
- Reich (Third) 356
- Reines, Alvin J. 223n43, 224n45,
 227n53, 227n54
- Remo/Remus 144, 165
- Renner, Karl 302, 302n11
- reparation 19, 349, 350, 352, 353, 354
- Republican 304, 330n99
- res publica christiana* 323
- Resende, Garcia de (João II) 264, 264n25,
 264n26, 264n27, 264n28, 265, 265n29,
 265n30, 265n31, 268n45
- Resina, Joan Ramon 350n27
- Resines, Antonio 357
- responsa* 250

- retablo* 91–112, 138, 138n37, 142, 143, 143n45, 155
mayor 124n16, 128fig5.13, 139fig5.21, 140fig5.22
- Reyes Católicos* (see also Catholic Monarchs) 6, 9n35, 21n82, 22n87, 36n10, 37n16, 43, 44n34, 49n47, 51n55, 59n77, 65n90, 67n94, 74n15, 75n19, 76, 76n20, 76n24, 81n44, 87n76, 93n4, 105n39, 113n1, 114n4, 114n5, 114n6, 115n6, 128n20, 135n25, 135n26, 137n31, 138n37, 146n57, 148n60, 148n61, 150n65, 150n67, 150n71, 153n85, 154n86, 154n87, 154n88, 155n93, 157n95, 158n1, 158n4, 175n76, 185n128, 185n129, 192n158, 194n165, 197n3, 197n4, 201n11, 202n13, 204n17, 205n18, 213n1, 220n31, 233n2, 234n6, 255n4, 257n7, 258n9, 263n24, 269n48, 272n58, 272n59, 277n78, 281, 292, 294, 296, 302n7, 308n30, 309, 310fig12.3, 311fig12.4, 311n36, 311n37, 312n38, 312n39, 316n56, 317n61, 318n62, 318n64, 319n65, 322n74, 326n91, 327n93, 332n106, 333n107, 333n110, 336n122
- Rhine 95n12
- Ribeiro de Menezes, Alison 350n27
- Ribera, Alonso de 144n47
- Ribera, Diego de 144n47
- Ribot, Luis 153n82
- Ribot García, Luis Antonio 73n11, 200n7
- Riello, Giorgio 157n96
- Riera Hernández, Francesc Xavier 41n25
- Riet, Sandra van 145n51
- right-wing 12, 19, 33, 307n25, 365
- Ripstein, Arturo 357
- Rivera Garretas, María-Milagros 82n53, 85n64, 86n66, 86n68, 89n86
- Roberts, W. Rhys 42n27
- Robertson, D.W. 171
- Robertson, Duncan 81n46
- Roca Alamany, Lope de 183
- Rodado Ruiz, Ana M. 162n18
- Rodrigues, Ana María S.A. 275n72
- Rodríguez del Padrón, Juan 72
- Rodríguez González, Margarita 206n22
- Rodríguez-Mansilla, Fernando 308n32, 316, 316n57, 317n59, 317n60, 332n105
- Rodríguez Marchante, Oti 355n45, 358
- Rodríguez Sánchez, Ángel 265n32, 267n42
- Rodríguez Valencia, Vicente 4n7, 5, 9, 65, 66, 66n91, 67, 73n10, 74n15, 79n37, 79n38, 80n38, 82n49, 83n54, 86n69, 252n37, 314n49, 314n52, 315n53, 361
- Rodríguez Zúñiga, Luis 256n4
- Rogers, Nicholas 105n37
- Rojas, Francisco de 54n64
- Rojas de Córdoba, Sancho de, Marquis of Poza 170, 191
- Rojas Donat, Luis 206n22
- Roman 41, 66, 190, 232, 233, 241, 242, 304, 322
 law 179, 248
- Román, Comendador 271
- romance* (see also ballad) 163n19, 271, 271n56
- Romance language 273n66, 323
- Romanticism 344
- Rombouts, Nicolas 123, 123n14, 124n15, 146
- Rome 34, 36, 47, 48, 48n46, 49, 52, 54, 54n62, 55, 56n68, 57, 58n74, 59, 59n77, 60, 64n86, 66, 69, 164n23, 165, 194n167, 238, 242, 252, 346
- Romero, Carlos 207n23
- Ronda 93, 205
- Rosales, Eduardo 344
- rosary 4, 345
- Rosellon 325, 325n87
- Roselly, Count 314
- Rosenwein, Barbara 260, 260n13, 260n14
- Rota 203
- Roth, Cecil 60, 60n80
- Roth, Norman 220n31, 224
- rotulo* 145n51, 186
- Royal Academy of History 313
- Royal Chapel 31, 233, 234, 235, 237
- Royal Council (see also *Consejo Real*) 158, 182, 208, 242
- Rubios, Palacios 242, 307, 308n30, 309
- Rublack, Ulinka 157
- Rueda Laffond, José Carlos 348
- Rufo Isern, Paulina 201n11, 203n15, 204n17
- Ruiz, Teófilo 217n19, 221n33
- Ruiz de Medina, Juan 53, 54n63
- Ruiz-Gálvez Priego, Esther
- Ruiz García, Elisa 97, 97n19, 98, 101, 101n28, 103n32, 115n7, 273n66
- Ruiz Quesada, Francesc 154n89
- Ruiz Souza, Juan Carlos 115n7

- Rumeu de Armas, Antonio 158n1, 201n11
 Russell, P.E. 207n24
 Russian 323
 Ryjik, Veronica 313n48
- Sá, Guimarães 259n11
 Saba, Abraham 229, 230
 Sabbath 250
Sabrina 357
 Sáenz de Santa María Gómez-Mampaso, Blanca 14n57
 Sagredo Fernández, Félix 120n12, 131n21
 Saguino, Juan 355n45
 Sáinz de Baranda, Pedro 195n170
 Sainz de Robles, Federico Carlos 279n2
 Sáiz, Rafa 92fig4.1, 102fig4.2
 Sáiz Serrano, Jorge 303n12, 308, 309n33, 309n34, 331n101, 336n121
 Salamanca 37n15, 82, 182, 194, 241, 265, 265n32, 273n65
 Cathedral of 266
 Papers 330n99
 University of 80, 85, 86, 241
 Saldaña Sánchez, Querubín 115fig5.1
 Salinas, Count of 170
 Salinas, Francisca 169, 169n48, 170
 Salisbury, Earl of 190n151
 Salomon, Noël 313
 Salvá, Miguel 195n170
 Salvador Esteban, Emilia 255n4
 Salvador Miguel, Nicasio 74n12, 74n15, 75n17, 77, 77n29, 78, 80n43, 153n82, 219, 219n28
 Samaria 218
 Samuel, book of 226, 226n54, 226n55, 227
 San Bartolomé, Colegio Mayor de 241
 San Juan de los Reyes 29, 81, 114–35, 115fig5.1, 116fig5.2, 117fig5.3, 118fig5.4, 119fig5.5, 151, 156
 San Martín, Juan de 34, 35, 43
 San Pedro, Diego de 173, 176, 176n80, 177, 187, 188n142, 193n162
 San Salvador de Oviedo, College of (Salamanca) 241
 San Sixtus, Cardinal (see also Torquemada, Juan de) 101n28
 Sánchez, Antón 142
 Sánchez, Diego 142
 Sánchez, Policarpo 330n99
 Sánchez, Rodolfo 343, 348, 352
 Sánchez Cantón, Francisco Javier 128n20, 138n36, 138n38, 142n39, 142n40, 142n41, 142n43, 142n46, 142n47, 144n47, 145n51, 146n54, 151n72, 151n73, 152n79, 155n90, 155n91, 155n92
 Sánchez de Badajoz, Garci 170, 170n52, 178, 271
 Sánchez Domingo, Rafael 117n11
 Sánchez Ortiz, César 168n43
 Sánchez Reyes, Enrique 298n10
 Sánchez Seoane, Loreto 3n4
 Sanlúcar de Barrameda 203, 205n18
 Santa Clara, Convent of 202
 Santa Cruz, Alonso de 6, 9, 9n35, 277, 277n78, 301, 302n7, 309, 311n36, 311n37, 312n38, 327n92
 Santa Cruz, Colegio de (Valladolid) 241, 309, 310fig12.3, 311fig12.4
 Santa Cruz la Real, Monastery of 151n74
 Santa Hermandad 37, 224
 Santa María, Pablo de 79n36, 191, 210, 221, 221n35
 Santa María, Puerto de 203
 Santa María de Nieva, Cortes of 62
 Santángel, Ángela de (Countess of Acuña) 167, 169, 169n47
 Santángel, Luis de 167, 169
 Santángel, Miguel Gerónimo 169n47
 Santarem 256n5
 Santiago, Apostle 96, 100, 105n39, 324, 324n85
 Santiago de Compostela 50n54, 243, 251
 Santiago 'del Arzobispo,' College of (Salamanca) 241
 Santiago 'el Zebedeo,' College of 241
 Santiago, Order of 65n89
 Santiago Fernández, Javier de 304n19
 Santillana, Marquis of 93
 Santo Tomás el Real, Monastery of (Ávila) 266
santoral 28, 98n21
 Santos Silva, Manuela 275n72
 Sanz Hermida, Jacobo 258n9, 272n62, 273n65
 Saracen 46
 Saragossa (see also Zaragoza) 318, 321

- Sardinia 325
 Sarmiento, Marina 170
 Saul, King 226, 230
 Scase, Wendy 105n37
 Scholastic 3
 Schoute, Roger van 142n42
 Schrader, Jeffrey 135n25
 Schultz, James A. 179n98
 Schwartz, Lía 81n46
 Schwartz, Stuart B. 206n21
 science fiction 348, 348n21
 Scotland 185
 Scripture 89, 98, 101n28
 secessionist 333, 335, 336
 Second Republic 252, 303, 304
 Second Vatican Council 252
 Segorbe, Duque de 286, 287, 291
 Segovia 37, 49, 49n51, 50n52, 51n55, 52, 52n59, 55, 59, 59n77, 60, 114n6, 144, 150, 151n74, 223n42, 224, 239, 318
 Concord of/Concordia de 256, 318
 Segovia, Juan de 101n28
 Segura Graiño, Cristina 72n5, 73n11, 74n12, 75n16, 78n31, 200, 200n7, 200n8
self-fashioning 4n8, 22, 23, 26, 27, 34–71, 77n27, 150, 255, 258
 Selgas, José 314
senhal 172
 Sénz de Miera, Jesús 148n60
 separatist 330, 333, 333n11, 335
 Sephardic 18, 19, 214, 350, 353, 354n42, 354n43
 Sephardim 229, 231
 Sepúlveda 49, 49n51, 50n51
 Serrano Martín, Eliseo 205n18
 Serrano y Sanz, Manuel 82n51, 83n57, 84n59, 85n62
sésamo 187
The Seven Year Itch 357
 Sevilla/Seville 18, 35, 35n5, 38, 39, 39n20, 43, 43n32, 44, 44n35, 58n74, 64, 64n89, 65n89, 98, 99n22, 163, 166, 181, 185, 193, 203, 204, 204n16, 205n18, 207, 207n25, 209, 209n28, 239, 239n18, 244, 245, 247, 248, 252, 252n35, 266n36, 273n66, 289, 304, 321, 322, 325, 333
 Sewaert-Núñez, Christine 87n75
 Shadis, Miriam 28n107, 29n112, 29n113
 Sheingorn, Pamela 105, 105n37, 105n38
 Shmuelevitz, Aryeh 217n20, 218n20
 Sicily/Sicilia 35, 35n5, 53n60, 57, 58, 58n74, 59n75, 188, 254, 255, 274n68, 324, 325
 Sidon 232
 -ian 16, 217, 218, 229
 Siena 107
Las siete partidas 179, 261, 261n15
 Sigea, Luisa 87, 88n80
 Sigüenza 239
 Silió Cortés, César 307, 307n25, 307n26, 307n27, 307n28
 Silleras-Fernández, Núria 21, 21n84, 22, 22n86, 22n88, 22n89, 23, 23n95, 24, 32, 195n171, 257n6, 259n12, 274n68, 275n72, 332n105
 Siloé, Diego de 95n11, 96
 Siloé, Gil de 95, 95n12, 96, 124, 124n17, 125fig5.10, 126fig5.11, 127fig5.12, 128fig5.13
 Silva, Pedro de, Count of Cifuentes 205
 Silva Maroto, Pilar 96, 96n16, 97, 97n17, 124n17, 125n17, 135n25, 137n29, 137n32, 138n35, 138n37, 143n45, 146n57, 153n81
 Silvela, M. 270n52, 270n53
 Simonsohn, Shlomo 217n20, 218n20
 Sittow, Michel 137, 137n31, 137n34, 138n35, 138n37, 142
 Sixtus IV, Pope 4, 5, 34, 35, 40n22, 44, 50n54, 56, 56n67, 57, 58n74, 65, 66, 101, 245, 247, 249, 253
 Skolnik, Fred 218n23
 slavery 13, 14, 207, 207n25, 212, 212n32
 Smith, Anthony 302n9
 Snow, Joseph 85, 85n61
 Sobré, Judith Berg 95, 95n13, 96n13
 Sol, Doña 282
 Solís, Gutierre de, Count of Coria 176
 Solomon, King 150, 188
 Son of God 10, 11, 104, 108n46
 Sopenán 96
 Sophia Euphemia, Queen 181n104
 Soria 261
 Soria, Martín de 123, 131n22
 Sosa, Juana de 163
 Sotiropoulos, Dimitri 330n100
 Sotomayor, Elvira de 84
 Soyer, François 166n34
 Spain, allegorical figure of 282

- Spaniard 4, 30, 173, 203, 249, 299, 300,
301n6, 312, 315, 315n54, 317n60, 324n82,
327, 329, 332, 337, 338, 341, 348, 364, 366
- Spanish 2, 6, 11, 12, 13n54, 16, 17, 19, 21, 24,
28, 32, 34, 40n22, 45, 63, 70, 78n30,
85n61, 87, 88, 95n13, 124, 135, 137,
138n37, 152n80, 154, 154n88, 156, 156n94,
157n96, 158, 160, 172, 173, 175n74, 187,
197n3, 197n5, 198, 202n13, 209, 211, 212,
212n32, 214, 215n9, 218n20, 221, 221n33,
249, 251, 268n45, 269, 270, 271, 282,
292, 294, 296, 297, 299n3, 300, 301,
301n6, 302n10, 303, 304, 306, 308, 311,
313, 313n47, 314, 314n49, 315, 315n54,
316, 317, 317n60, 318, 319, 323, 323n79,
323n81, 324, 324n81, 324n82, 326, 327,
328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 334, 334n112,
335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 339n1, 341, 342,
344, 348, 350, 350n26, 350n27, 353, 354,
354n42, 354n43, 355, 356, 358, 363, 364,
364n64, 365
- American War 333n11
- Armada 315n54
- Civil War 252, 299, 343n7
- Empire 198, 256, 315, 342
- Fascist 356
- Golden Age 32
- Imperialism 364
- Inquisition (see also Inquisition) 13,
14n59, 31, 36, 40, 45, 47, 59n75, 183, 232–
53, 345, 347, 361, 362, 362n59, 362n60
- Minister of Foreign Affairs 364n65
- Parliament 335
- Renaissance 3, 81n46, 135n25, 154n89
- Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) 335
- Sperling, S. David 218, 218n23, 219n24
- spes* 169
- sprezzatura* 275
- Spufford, Peter 152n80
- Stafford, Pauline 27, 27n105
- State of the Autonomies 334n112
- Statute of Autonomy 334
- Steiner, George 174n70
- Stevens, John 174
- Stone, Marilyn 157n96
- Stuart, Nancy Rubin 4n10
- Suárez de Figueroa, Catalina 96, 110
- Suárez de Figueroa, Lorenzo, Count of
Coruña 187
- Suárez Fernández, Luis 54n63, 54n64,
61n82, 62n83, 68n95, 68n96, 135n25,
197n3, 200n8, 202n13, 204n17,
209n27, 220n31
- Suárez-Somonte, P. Saquero 269n48
- suelta* 189
- suerte* 163, 163n20
- summa* 48n46, 101n28, 268n45
- sumptuary law 7, 157, 157n96, 181–85
- Suprema, La* 242
- Surtz, Ronald 7, 7n25, 10, 10n41, 81n44,
81n46, 103, 103n34, 103n35, 237n14
- synagogue 44, 349
- Syriac 88
- TV series 12, 13, 17, 316n58
- Tabliezo, López de 235
- Talavera, Arcipreste de 72
- Talavera, Hernando de 61n8, 15, 74, 110n51,
111n51, 157, 157n96, 191, 192, 234, 234n4,
236, 270, 300n3
- Tamayo y Baus, Manuel 314
- Tanner, Heather 26n103, 27n106, 28, 28n109
- Tapia, Juan de 163
- Tarín y Juaneda, Francisco 131n22, 132n22
- Tarsicio de Azcona 49n47, 56n68, 107n44,
114n4, 197n3, 234n4, 237, 239n16, 256n5,
256n6, 321n68
- Tato, Cleofé 187n137
- Taubert, Johannes 132n24
- Tausiet, María 261n17
- Taylor, Elizabeth 357
- Téllez-Girón, Juan 178
- Temprano, Juan Carlos 195n173
- Tendilla
Count of 89, 188, 188n144
Duke of 84n60
- Tenenti, Alberto 262n18
- Tenerife 206
- Teresa of Ávila, Saint 361
- terrorist 330
- Teruel, José 6n23, 341n5
- Thamūd 215
- Thecla, Saint 91n1
- "third order" 4
- Thirty Years' War 328
- Ticknor, George 313n47
- Toledo 13, 29, 35n5, 37n13, 42n28, 43n31,
50, 51, 67, 67n94, 81, 87, 89, 96, 100, 114,

- 114n4, 114n5, 115fig5.1, 116fig5.2, 116n8, 117,
 117fig5.3, 119fig5.5, 148n60, 155, 155n90,
 185, 243, 248, 252, 272, 273, 283, 285, 318,
 320, 321, 325, 325n87, 327, 345, 352
 Toledo, García de, Lord of La Horcajada 176
 Toledo, Mayor de 176
 Tolmie, Jane 344n12
 Tomic, Pere 301, 302n7
 Tordera, Antoni 169n48
 Tordesillas 15, 77n27, 201n11, 203n15, 264
 Toro 143n47
 battle of 16, 90n94, 114, 114n4, 234
 Toros de Guisando 283
 Torquemada, Juan de (see also San Sixtus,
 Cardinal) 101n28
 Torquemada, Tomás de 12, 42n29, 45, 45n37,
 49, 50, 50n52, 50n53, 50n54, 52n59,
 246, 346, 346n14, 347, 347n17, 351, 353
 Torre y del Cerro, Antonio de la 113n1,
 152n80, 268n44
 Torre y del Cerro, Antonio de la 36n12,
 54n62, 56n65, 56n66, 57n70, 59n76,
 66n92, 80n43, 82n51, 82n52, 83n55,
 113n1, 202n13, 255n4, 268n44
 Torres, Inés de 164n23, 177n88
 Tortosa 250
 torture 190, 249
 Tournai 145, 152
 Tovar, Luis de 177, 177n89
 Tovar, María de 111
 Trastámara 93, 111, 117, 132, 219, 220, 220n31,
 221, 261n17, 267n40, 267
 Enrique de (Enrique II of Castile) 219
 Trastamarian 162n16
 trauma 230, 351, 352, 365
 Travalia, Caroline 2n3, 6, 6n20, 20, 20n81, 21,
 21n83, 24n98, 33
 Tremlett, Giles 281n4
 Treves, Letizia 135n25, 154n89
 Triana 204, 209
 Trincer, Pere 183
 Trinity Sunday 233
 Trueba, Fernando 14n58, 355–60, 356fig13.2,
 359fig13.3, 365
 Trujillo 202
 Trump, Donald 6, 336, 364
 “Trumpista” 364
 Tudela, José 307, 307n29
 Tudor, Mary 87
 Tunisian 215
 Turk 217, 322n76
 Tuy 61n83, 239
 Lucas de, Bishop 301, 301n7
 Twitter 364n63
 Twomey, Lesley 101, 101n28, 101n29, 101n30
 Tyrian 218
 Ultrapuertos 318
 Unamuno, Miguel de 246, 247, 247n31
 United States 299n2
 Urbach, Susan 124n17
 Urban IV 36n9
 Urbino 137
 Urraca, Queen 281
 Urueña, Count of 178
 Uytven, R. van 123n14
 Vaca, Francisco 184
 Val Valdivieso, María Isabel 77n28, 78n34,
 79n35, 79n36, 81n46, 84n60, 85n63,
 90n96, 197n3, 200n8
 Valdeón Barúque, Julio 146n57, 197n3,
 200n7, 200n8, 206n22, 312n39
 Valencia 35, 35n5, 39, 40, 40n22, 41, 57n70,
 160, 162, 164n26, 165, 166, 168, 183,
 184n112, 190, 207, 246, 249, 286, 287, 291,
 318, 321, 325, 325n87, 328, 328n94, 333
 Valents (party) 333
 Valera, Mayor de 177
 Valera, (Mosén) Diego de 9, 10, 10n39,
 23n90, 103, 103n33, 183, 184, 184n121,
 300n3, 301, 302n7, 325n88, 341
 Valladolid 5, 20, 65, 73n10, 191, 192, 200n7,
 241, 252, 304n18, 307n25, 309, 310fig12.3,
 311fig12.4, 320, 321, 327, 361
 Vallejo, Lucía 149n65, 154n88
 Valley of the Fallen 355, 357
 vandalization 364
 Vandenbroecke, Paul 124n15
 Vann, Theresa M. 78n30
 Vaquero Serrano, María del
 Carmen 88n82, 88n83
vara 145n51
 Varela, Consuelo 74n14, 76n20, 77n27,
 80n40, 84n60, 209n28, 211n31
 Varo, Carlos 185n131
vasallo hidalgo 177
 Vashti, Queen 227, 229

- Vatican 20, 252, 352, 361, 361n54,
362, 362n57
Council for Christian Unity 20n80, 360
Council II on Religious Liberty 252, 360
- Vázquez de Acuña, Pedro 167
Vázquez de Prada, Valentín 152n80
Veblen, Thorstein 160n10
Vega, Leonor de la 178
Vega Vázquez, Isabel 166, 166n35, 167,
167n36, 167n39
Velasco, Antonio de 170, 170n52, 170n53
Velasco, Francisca de 87
Velasco, Juana de 111n52
Velasco, María de 111n51
Velasco González, Alberto 154n89
Velázquez Basanta, Fernando Nicolás 215,
215n10, 215n13, 215n14, 216n16
Velesco, Alberto 135n25
Vélez-Málaga 270
Vélez-Sainz, Julio 72n3
Venetian 8, 182, 216, 216n17
Venezuela 314
Venice 160, 216n17, 226n54
Ventadorn, Bernart de 180, 180n103
Venus 171n56, 314
Verlinden, Charles 207n25
Vespers 234, 236
Vicens Vives, Jaume 40n24
Vicent, Francesch 183
Vicente, María V. 75n18
Vidal, José Manuel 361n55
Vieira, Alberto 206n21
Viguera Molíns, María Jesús 215n10
Villafuerte, Juan de 221n35
Villarta, Ángeles 358n48
Villena, Enrique de 270, 270n54
Villena, Marqués de 75, 111n51, 282, 284
Vinson III, Ben 212n32
Vinyoles, Narcís 183
Viña Brito, Ana del Carmen 206n21,
206n22
Violante de Aragón 78n30
Virgil 88
Virgin Mary 1, 9, 11, 103, 105n37, 106, 110, 112,
184, 189, 233, 236, 256
virtud 8, 8n31, 51n55, 62n84, 66, 66n92,
74n15, 82n53, 109n49, 157n97,
251n34, 312n38
virtuosity (see also *agudeza*) 175
- Viseu, Duke of 208, 209n27
Visigoth 206, 301
vita 105, 184, 184n122
Vivanco, Laura 261n15
Vives, Juan Luis 9, 73, 73n6, 84n60, 87,
87n78, 89n88
Vizcaya 35n5, 197n4, 203, 221, 325, 325n87
Volckaert, An 145n51
Vollendorf, Lisa 179n97
Voltes, Pedro 83n54
Voragine 98, 99, 105, 109
Vota, Paul Mary 362n59
VOX 12, 317n60, 335, 335n120, 336, 363, 365,
365n63, 365n64
Vulcan 168n46, 193
- Walfish, Barry Dov 229, 229n62, 229n65,
230, 230n67
Walsh, William Thomas 64, 64n88, 182n110
Warren, Nancy B. 81n46
Washington, D.C. 2, 99, 140fig5.22, 300n3,
364
Wattāsīd 215
Waugh, Robin 269, 269n47
Weiss, Jessica 5, 5n12, 6, 7n24, 15, 15n62, 23,
23n94, 138n35, 138n37, 143n45, 146n57,
148n59, 149n65, 153n81, 155n93
Weiss, Julian 162n16, 164n23, 171n59, 177n91,
180n101, 186n135
Weissberger, Barbara 2, 2n2, 5, 5n16, 7,
7n25, 7n27, 10n39, 23n91, 76n25, 80n41,
80n43, 81n44, 88, 88n85, 90n94, 103n33,
103n34, 153n81, 156n96, 179, 179n97,
196n1, 196n2, 196n3, 213n2, 214, 214n6,
214n7, 256n6, 341, 341n3, 341n5, 344,
344n10, 347, 347n18
Wenceslas, King 181n104
Weniger, Matthias 137n31, 137n34, 138n35,
138n37
Wenzel IV, King 181n104
West Indies 19
Westerveld, Govert 183n14
Weyden, Rogier van der 132, 132n24,
133fig5.17
Wheeler, Bonnie 261n103
Whetnall, Jane 160n11, 186n133, 187n137
Whinnom, Keith 175, 176n80, 178n92,
193n162
White, Hayden 279, 279n1

- Whitsun 233, 235
 Wilson, Katharina M. 85n61, 85n62
 Winius, George D. 207n24
 Wolsey, Thomas 150n70
 Woods, Kim 142n43
 Woodward, Kenneth L. 361n53, 362n56
 Wreede, Johannes 176
 Wunder, Amanda 157n96

 Ximene 357
 Ximénez de Urrea, Juan Manuel 172n62

 Yagüe, Antonio M. 331n103
 Yalom, Marilyn 196n2
 Yarza Luaces, Joaquín 93n4, 120n12, 124n16,
 124n17, 126n18, 126n19, 135n26, 137n29,
 138n36, 144n47, 146n57, 147n58, 148n59,
 149n65, 151n77, 153n81, 154n88
 Yearling, Roy 361n54
 Yerushalmi, Yosef Hayim 216n17

yugo 194, 194n166, 306
yunque 192, 192n158

 Zacut, Abraham 221n33
 Zalama Rodríguez, Miguel Ángel 113n1,
 115n6, 148n60, 149n67, 152n78, 154n88
 Zamora 37n15, 184n122
 Zamora, Rodrigo de 72
 Zaragoza (see also Saragossa) 96n14, 99,
 189, 192, 287, 289
 Zarra 165
 Zavala, Iris M. 82n53
 Zinato, Andrea 188n142
 Zorrilla, José 314
 Zúñiga, Isabel de, Duchess of Alba 84
 Zúñiga, Juan de 84
 Zúñiga, Pedro de, Count of Miranda 205
 Zurita, Jerónimo 266, 266n35, 266n37
 Zwartjes, Otto 323n78